Alleged 'ice' paid in exchange for stolen TV found to be sugar. » PAGE 2

'Diabetes by far No. 1 cause of blindness in CNMI.' » PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

75¢

Volume XXIV, Issue No. 258
TUESDAY DECEMBER 30, 2014
www.saipantribune.com

TOURISM VROOM MARK RABAGO

Chevrolet Camaros and Ford Mustangs line the parking lot of one of the many rental car businesses that sprouted along Beach Road the past couple of years as the CNMI's tourism industry started to rebound. According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota registered 39,137 visitors in November 2014, compared to 33,678 visitors received in November 2013.

OVER DENIAL OF CW1 PETITIONS

Over 500 Dynasty foreign workers sue federal officials

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Over 500 foreign workers at Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino have filed a lawsuit in federal court against Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson and other federal officials over the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services denial of the company's 197 CNMI-only Transitional Worker petitions involving 693 beneficiaries.

See DYNASTY on Page 4

» Atty. Berline says USCIS position is that each employee seeking renewal of employment had to 'sit idly' on Tinian for one year

» Many affected workers have US citizen children

Unclear whether oil, objects found in sea linked to lost jet

By TRISNADI MARJAN and MARGIE MASON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SURABAYA, Indonesia (AP)—An Indonesian helicopter searching for the missing AirAsia jetliner saw two oily spots in the water Monday, and an Australian search plane spotted objects elsewhere in the Java Sea, but it was too early to know whether either was connected to the aircraft and its 162 passengers and crew.

In any case, officials saw little reason to believe AirAsia Flight 8501 met anything but a grim fate after it disappeared from radar Sun-

AP

Relatives and next-of-kin of passengers on the AirAsia flight QZ8501 comfort each other as they wait for the latest news on the search of the missing jetliner at Juanda International Airport in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia, Monday, Dec. 29, 2014.

See UNCLEAR on Page 4

Ex-Army Ranger files $5M lawsuit vs CNMI over seizure of his guns

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

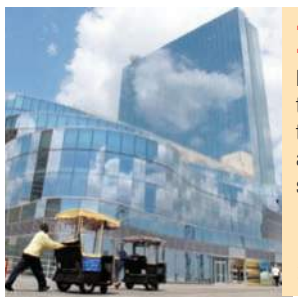
Paul Michael Murphy, a former U.S. Army Ranger who is now a teacher, is filing a $5-million lawsuit in federal court against the CNMI government over the confiscation of his firearms and ammunition in 2007.

In a pro se complaint or without a lawyer, Murphy also asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to repeal the CNMI Weapons Control Act and all associated legislation, licensing, taxation, recording, administration, and processing.

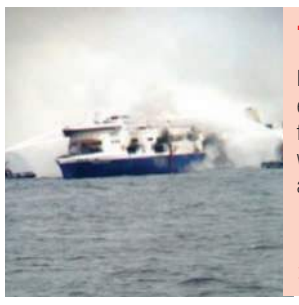
Murphy said the Department of Public Safety withheld all his firearms and ammunition until the issuance of a firearms, ammunition, and explo-

See EX-ARMY on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS
Few people are more eager to see the clock strike midnight on Dec. 31 than Atlantic City casino executives and the thousands of workers who still have jobs there.
» PAGE 13



WORLD
Hundreds of passengers and crew endured a second night of smoke, frigid temperatures and gale-force winds as they waited to be evacuated from a burning ferry.
» PAGE 16

LIFE & STYLE
Audiences had their pick of genres during the Christmas weekend, but despite a host of fresh arrivals, splashy holiday fare like "Unbroken" and "Into the Woods" proved no match for "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies."
» PAGE 20

GOT A NEWS TIP?
TEL: 235-6397
235-2440
FAX: 235-3740
EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Alleged 'ice' paid in exchange for stolen TV found to be sugar

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The two baggies that contained alleged methamphetamine or "ice" that a habitual offender handed to a co-defendant in exchange for a stolen 30-inch flat screen TV, turned out to be sugar.

The discovery about sugar came out during a preliminary hearing last Dec. 24 in the case against the 28-year-old Joseph Aldan.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho eventually dismissed the criminal case against Aldan and ordered his release from the custody of the Department of Corrections.

The original preliminary hearing was set for Dec. 23, but the Office of the Attorney General failed to file a charging document by the deadline. This prompted Camacho to dismiss the case and ordered Aldan's release.

The OAG then immediately filed the charging document and Aldan was taken back into the DOC custody. The preliminary hearing was then set for Dec. 24.

At the hearing, assistant attorney general Clayton Graef stated for the record that the government will not prosecute conspiracy to commit theft as charged in count 2 of the information.

Assistant public defender Michael Sato, counsel for Aldan, did not call any witness.

In his minute order issued yesterday, Judge Camacho said the government failed to present any evidence that indicated that Aldan knew or should have known that the TV did not belong to co-defendant, Michael Manalo.

Furthermore, Camacho said the government's arguments did not support the information (charging document) that was filed for the preliminary hearing.

The judge noted that in count 1 charging Aldan with theft, the government lists Michael Manalo's grandmother, Elphidia Aguon Manalo, as victim yet the government argues that Michael Manalo is the victim because Aldan allegedly sold him two baggies containing only sugar.

"The government seems confuse how to treat Michael Manalo as a victim or co-defendant, and especially confuse whether the Office of the Attorney General can charge a person for attempting to buy illegal drugs when in fact that person only got plain sugar sold at most stores in Saipan," Camacho said, adding that the government failed to proof probable cause as to the theft count.

Police Detective Catherine B. Pangelinan testified that when Michael Manalo smoked the first baggie, the "substance" turned brown.

Pangelinan said when Michael Manalo tasted the "substance" in the second baggie, he discovered it was sugar.

Pangelinan stated that it was Michael Manalo's mother herself who called police last Dec. 1 to disclose that her son stole his grandmother's TV.

Pangelinan said Manalo admitted that he took the TV from the room that belongs to his grandmother and gave it to Aldan in exchange for "ice."

Aldan's previous cases going back to 2001 include robbery, theft, and assault with a dangerous weapon.

Manalo's case is pending in court. He was released on unsecured bail. In his previous criminal case, he was found to have mental issues.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING MARK RABAGO

A couple looks at the watches on sale at the T Galeria in Garapan last Christmas Day, Dec. 25. Island retailers usually offer discounts during the holiday season and shoppers are quick to take advantage of the promotions.

NEW YEAR'S DAY
Special Brunch
Thursday, January 1, 2015

CORAL OCEAN GOLF RESORT
JANUARY 01, 2015
"Noodle Special Buffet"

FOOD
Enjoy a wide variety of food from Seafood, Sushi, Noodles, Roast Pig, Roast Top Sirloin and many more.

(2) FREE beer and/or bottomless champagne

POOL PASS
Every customer having Brunch will receive a FREE "pool pass". Make an inquiry.

PRICE
$25.00 (Adult) and
$12.50 (Ages 4-11 years)
Time: 11:00am - 2:00pm
Place: Double Eagle

Coral Ocean Golf Resort
For Reservation call (670) 234-7000 ext. 623
Major Credit Card Accepted

Man allegedly beat up common-law wife for smelling perfume

A jealous man allegedly beat up his common-law wife for smelling perfume at a residence in Kagman II on Saturday before dawn.

Joseph Flores Kaipat, 26, was arrested for assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

At a hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho imposed a $2,500 cash bail and set the preliminary hearing for Jan. 6 at 1:30pm.

Assistant public defender Matthew Meyer was appointed as counsel for Kaipat.

Detective Therese S. Kintoki stated in her report that a police officer was dispatched to a residence in Kagman II, where a domestic violence was reported on Saturday at 3:47am.

Kintoki said when the officer arrived at the house he met the alleged victim and her uncle. Kaipat was sleeping in the bedroom at that time.

Kintoki said according to the alleged victim, she and her family arrived home from visiting their relatives in Koblerville last Friday night.

The alleged victim noticed that Kaipat was acting jealous upon seeing her talking with one of her male relatives.

Later at 3am, she was awakened when she heard her five-year-old son crying and asking to use the restroom. She got up and helped her son to the restroom.

After helping her son, she went back to the room and tried to go back to sleep. Kaipat asked her where she came from and why she was using perfume.

The alleged victim explained that she just came back from helping her son use the restroom. Kaipat then allegedly pulled her hair and asked her if she was looking for someone.

She walked out to the living room and sat on the couch. Kaipat followed her in the living room and asked to give her cigarette.

When she told him she doesn't have cigarette, Kaipat got angry and allegedly punched her on the left shoulder. She ran to the hallway and sat next to her aunt's bedroom door.

Kaipat approached her, grabbed her on the shoulders and dragged her on the floor to the kitchen area. He only stopped the assault when his common-law wife's uncle came out from his bedroom.

Police arrested Kaipat at 4:35am that same day. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

NMC aims to lower number of required credits for programs

The Northern Marianas College is working to bring the number of required credits for their programs in line with goals of the nationwide initiative "Complete College America," which aims to create reforms to boost college completion and close attainment gaps.

NMC described CCA as one of the "game changers" in their NMC Strategic Plan for 2015-2020. Some of things CCA aims to reform nationwide are remediation in colleges, and the time it takes students to graduate.

College president Dr. Sharon Hart told the Board of Regents last week that they have been working to line the college with CCA's major goals.

She said for NMC programs with "extensive amount of credits," the college is aiming to bring these numbers down to 120 credits for four-year degrees, and near 60 credits for two-year degrees.

For example, she said that they have brought down required credits in NMC's natural resource program from a high of 74 credits to 63 credits.

"We've been working really well in trying to be more responsive to having our programs more in line with the standard out there," Hart said.

This helps students get in and complete their degree on time, she told the board. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

‘Diabetes by far No. 1 cause of blindness in CNMI’

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

According to Dr. Don Hardt of Hardt Eye Clinic, diabetes is by far the No. 1 cause of blindness in the CNMI.

“Many others do not go blind but suffer from severe vision loss that cannot be corrected with glasses. Diabetes can damage virtually every structure in the eye,” Hardt said.

Hardt pointed out that the list of ocular complications that comes with diabetes include diabetic retinopathy (the No. cause of blindness), cataracts, dry eyes, corneal keratopathy, cranial nerve palsies, diabet pappilopathy, and ischemic optic neuropathy.

“Symptoms vary from mild to very severe. In many cases there are no symptoms until irreversible damage has occurred,” Hardt said.

According to Hardt, 700 people were seen last year that were already diagnosed with diabetes.

About 74 percent of them had diabetic retinopathy.

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes that affects the eyes. It’s caused by damage to the blood vessels of the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye that can eventually result in blindness according to the National Eye Institute.

Diabetes is the non-communicable disease that causes the most problems. However, hypertension also leads to serious problems for many, these problems can include blindness.

“When diabetes is combined with hypertension, the effects on the eye are worse from both diabetes and hypertension when they are combined. In the U.S 71 percent of those with diabetes also have hypertension,” Hardt said.

Hardt knows this because he is the first Certified Diabetes Educator in the history of the CNMI back in 2010. There are now four CDEs. Hardt and his brother are two out of the 10 eye doctors in the entire U.S who have become CDEs. There are also no other CDEs or CDE programs in the other U.S Pacific Islands.

What is usually recommended by your clinic after check up? Hardt said that the advice they give depends on their condition. If they have severe retinopathy that is threatening severe vision loss, some will need ocular surgery. The patients are usually referred to their certified and fellowship trained ophthalmologist, Dr. Loren Seery, who visits their office from Guam.

“He performs laser surgeries in our office. Other patients need injections [called intravitreal] of medication into the eye. Most of the ocular complications of diabetes are treated by my brother and I,” Hardt said.

Hardt said that the most important thing for most people with diabetes is improved blood sugar control. “Medications are important, and can help a lot, but lifestyle changes are usually required for the best control.”

Hardt Eye Clinic works closely with the primary care physicians to achieve that goal. After every visit with one of their doctors or CDE, they would usually send a report to the primary care physician, according to Hardt.

Hardt Eye Clinic also provides CDE programs, one being Diabetes Self Management Education done by their nurses both for newly diagnosed patients, or patients who have never had the diabetes education before.

“Fighting diabetes and preventing its complications has become the passion of my professional life. While we provide many other important services in our clinic we are focused strongly on diabetes. All of the services we provide are fully covered by every major insurance companies in the CNMI. We also take care of many who have no insurance. So far we have treated every person with diabetes, regardless of their ability to pay, seeing many for free. We will continue to do this as long as we’re able to financially,” he said.

“It is absolutely critical that every patient with diabetes have their eyes checked at least one time per year. Those with retinopathy or other complications need to be seen more often,” he added.

Hardt is also the newly elected chair for the Non-Communicable Disease Alliance, a group of NCD advocates helping to promote a better life for people in the CNMI.

BW CAR RENTAL
NEW LOCATION
in GARAPAN, SUNLEADER BLDG.
Special Rate $100.00 for 3 days.
FREE Pick up and Drop off Service
287-2727
Mon. - Sun. • 9AM-9PM

LA Vi DUTY FREE
Golden Lion Jewelry
SUPER SALE
UP TO 70% OFF
SELECTED ITEMS
From Thanksgiving to New Year’s Day
HERE
FIESTA HOTEL
PASEO DE MARIANAS
SUBWAY
12:30PM-10:00PM Mon.-Sat.

Bill to increase salaries of several dept heads goes to Inos

The Senate passed H.B. 18-125 last Tuesday to increase the salaries of the secretaries of the Department of Finance, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, and the Department of Commerce to the same level as other cabinet members. The bill now goes to Gov. Eloy S. Inos for his signature.

If made into law, the heads of DCCA and Commerce would have an annual salary not exceeding $54,000, from their current $48,000. The secretary of finance would have an annual salary not exceeding $70,000, from the current $54,000.

The Legislature found that the salaries of these department heads have “been stagnant for many years,” despite their positions’ “increasing responsibilities and difficulties.”

The bill highlighted the important roles these departments play in the CNMI. The bill stated that the secretary of Commerce is “responsible for growing the CNMI economy and continuously looking for new investors” during economically challenged times.

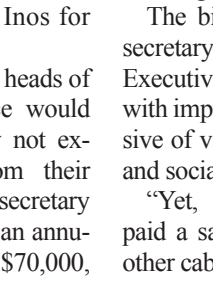
The bill stated that DCCA’s secretary manages the “biggest Executive Branch department with important functions” inclusive of various youth, nutrition, and social programs.

“Yet, these secretaries are paid a salary much lower than other cabinet members,” the bill stated. “Therefore, it is the intent of this measure to increase their salaries to the same level as other cabinet members.”

The bill was introduced by Rep. Antonio P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan). ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

NMC eyes hosting regional education conference

The Northern Marianas College is in talks with the Public School System to submit a joint proposal to host the 2016 Pacific Circle Conference, according to college president Dr. Sharon Hart in her report to the Board of Regents last week.


Hart

Next year’s 2015 conference is being held in Fiji at the University of South Pacific, according to PCC’s website. PCC describes themselves as “an initiative in international co-operation between educational research and development institutions” in the Pacific.

Its members come from all over the Pacific and to Asia. They focus on working together to producing curriculum materials, as well as honing in on issues of policy development and educational research, according to PCC.

The yearly conference is where joint projects are discussed and reported upon and a range of papers and symposia are presented, according to their website. PCC was established in 1977.

“PSS and we have been talking about submitting—before the end of the year—a joint proposal to host the 2016 Pacific Circle Conference,” Hart said.

She added that the conference is focused around K-12 grades, as well as higher education. It has never been held in Micronesia, according to her. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

UNCLEAR

From Page 1

day morning over the Java Sea. Wary of bad weather, one of the pilots had asked to raise the plane's altitude just before it vanished, but was not allowed because another aircraft was in the way.

"Based on the coordinates that we know, the evaluation would be that any estimated crash position is in the sea, and that the hypothesis is the plane is at the bottom of the sea," Indonesia search and rescue chief Henry Bambang Soelistyo said.

The Airbus A320-200 vanished in airspace thick with storm clouds on its way from Surabaya, Indonesia, to Singapore.

Jakarta's Air Force base commander Rear Marshal Dwi Putranto said an Australian Orion aircraft had detected "suspicious" objects near Nangka island about 100 miles (160 kilometers) off central Kalimantan. That's about 700 miles (1,120 kilometers) from the location where the plane lost contact, but within Monday's greatly expanded search area.

"However, we cannot be sure whether it is part of the missing AirAsia plane," Putranto said. "We are now moving in that direction, which is in cloudy conditions."

Air Force spokesman Rear Marshal Hadi Tjahnanto told MetroTV that an Indonesian helicopter spotted two oily spots in the Java Sea east of Belitung island, much closer to where the plane lost contact than the objects viewed from the Australian plane. He said oil samples would be collected and analyzed to see if they are connected to the missing plane.

The last communication from the cockpit to air traffic control was a request by one of the pilots to increase altitude from 32,000 feet (9,754 meters) to 38,000 feet (11,582 meters) because of the rough weather. Air traffic control was not able to immediately grant the request because another plane was in the airspace, said Bambang Tjahjono, director of the state-owned company in charge of air-traffic control.

By the time clearance could be given, Flight 8501 had disappeared, Tjahjono said. The twin-engine, single-aisle plane, which never sent a distress signal, was last seen on radar four minutes after the last communication from the cockpit.

First Adm. Sigit Setiayana, the Naval Aviation Center commander at the Surabaya air force base, said 12 navy ships, five planes, three helicopters and a number of warships were taking part in the search, along with ships and planes from Singapore and Malaysia. The Australian Air Force also sent a search plane.

Many fishermen from Belitung island have joined in the search, and all vessels in that area of the sea have been alerted to be on the lookout for anything that could be linked to the plane.

The plane's disappearance and suspected crash caps an astonishingly tragic year for air travel in Southeast Asia, and Malaysia in particular. Malaysia-based AirAsia's loss comes on top of the still-unexplained disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 in March with 239 people aboard, and the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in July over Ukraine, which killed all 298 passengers and crew.

"Until today, we have never lost a life," AirAsia group CEO Tony Fernandes, who founded the low-cost carrier in 2001, told reporters in Jakarta airport. "But I think that any airline CEO who says he can guarantee that his airline is 100 percent safe, is not accurate."

He refused to address compensation issues or any changes that may be made to the airline as a result of this incident.

"We have carried 220 million people up to this point," he said. "Of course, there's going to be some reaction, but we are confident in our ability to fly people, and we'll continue to be strong and continue to carry people who never could fly before."

Nearly all the passengers and crew are Indonesians, who are frequent visitors to Singapore, particularly on holidays.

Flight 8501 took off Sunday morning from Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city, and was about halfway to Singapore when it vanished from radar. The jet had been airborne for about 42 minutes.

Sunardi, a forecaster at Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics Agency, said dense storm clouds were detected up to 13,400 meters (44,000 feet) in the area at the time.

"There could have been turbulence, lightning and vertical as well as horizontal strong winds within such clouds," said Sunardi, who like many Indonesians uses only one name.

The plane had an Indonesian captain, Iryanto, who uses one name, and a French co-pilot, five cabin crew members and 155 passengers, including 16 children and one infant, the airline said in a statement. Among the passengers were three South Koreans, a Malaysian, a British national and his 2-year-old Singaporean daughter. The rest were Indonesians.

AirAsia said the captain had more than 20,000 flying hours, of which 6,100 were with AirAsia on the Airbus 320. The first officer had 2,275 flying hours.

"Papa, come home, I still need you," Angela Anggi Ranastianis, the captain's 22-year-old daughter pleaded on her Path page late Sunday, which was widely quoted by Indonesian media. "Bring back my papa. Papa, please come home."

EX-ARMY

From Page 1

sive identification card on Sept. 20, 2007.

He said his two firearms were sent to Guam Police Department armory for holding while the ammunition is still being held by CNMI DPS Firearms Section.

Murphy said DPS had denied his repeated request to carry and possess his rifle and pistol.

Sen. Pete Ryes (Ind-Saipan) and Sen. Sixto Igisomar (R-Saipan) have filed a bill that will regulate handguns in the Commonwealth in anticipation of the U.S. District Court possibly shooting down the Commonwealth Weapons Control Act.

Senate Bill 18-69 is a measure "to provide for the possession and management of firearms in the Commonwealth."

The Commonwealth Weapons Control Act has been challenged in the courts and Reyes said the CNMI is now faced with a difficult decision—whether to fight a costly legal battle with little or no prospect of success or move forward in conformance with the Second Amendment.

Last September, David J. Radich, a U.S. Navy Gulf War veteran, and his wife filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court challenging the constitutionality of the CNMI Weapons Control Act that prohibits all residents from obtaining handguns for self-defense purposes. Radich's wife suffered serious injuries during a home invasion on Saipan in 2010.

DYNASTY

From Page 1

Belal Hossain, Wenli Zhong, Pukar Patel, and 500 unknown co-plaintiffs are suing Johnson, USCIS director Leon Rodriguez, and USCIS California Service Center director Kathy A. Baran.

The workers, through counsel Bruce Berline, asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to declare that USCIS is precluded from relying on a pending criminal case against Hong Kong Entertainment (Overseas) Investments Ltd., which owns and operates the 412-room hotel with casino, as a basis for determining that HKE is not a legitimate employer.

The workers requested the court to declare that the denial of HKE's CW-1 petitions on grounds that HKE is not a legitimate employer is contrary to and in violation of due process as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

The workers asked the court to declare that USCIS' disparate treatment of plaintiff Zhong and HKE's other renewal CW-1 applicants is contrary to and violates equal protection of the laws as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

They moved the court to declare that the USCIS' implementation, interpretation, and application of the CW regulations and associated policies, written and unwritten, especially as applied to plaintiffs' CW-1 petitions is contrary to, inconsistent with, and in violation of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (federalization of CNMI immigration).

The workers requested the court to declare that USCIS' conduct and handling of their CW-1 petitions and USCIS' denial of their petitions in December 2014 "is arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise contrary to law."

They sought court's declaration that USCIS violates the Administrative Procedures Act by utilizing and relying on unwritten rules and policies in its processing and consideration of their CW-1 petitions.

The plaintiffs asked the court to, among other things, enjoin defendants Johnson, Rodriguez, and Baran, and their agents from taking any action or implementing any policy toward them which is "contrary to, inconsistent with or in violation of the Administrative Procedures Act, the WARN Act or any other federal law."

The workers requested the court to require USCIS to revise the CW regulations so that they comport with the express Congressional intent articulated in the CNRA.

They also asked the court to require USCIS to approve their CW-1 petitions it denied in December 2014.

According to Berline in the complaint filed in court last Wednesday, plaintiff Hossain, a Bangladeshi, has lived in the CNMI for 18 years and started working with HKE in April 2013.

Hossain, 43, is married and is the father of four minor children all of whom are U.S. citizens.

Zhong, 37, a Chinese national, has lived in the CNMI for 15 years and has worked for HKE for over three years. She is employed as an electronics gaming attendant and is the mother of four minor children, three of whom are U.S. citizens.

Patel, 35, a citizen of India, has resided in the CNMI for 11 years. He has worked for HKE as a waiter for over a year now.

Berline said the 500 unnamed co-plaintiffs are foreign workers employed by HKE who are also being adversely and irreparably harmed by defendants.

Berline said defendants Johnson, Rodriguez, and Baran were aware of the fragile economy existing in the CNMI and especially Tinian.

The lawyer said Tinian has a population of only 2,105 based on the 2010 census. He said Tinian, like the other populated islands in the CNMI, is heavily dependent on foreign contract workers given its remote location and small population.

In November 2014, HKE employed approximately 598 employees of whom approximately 497 are foreign contract workers needing governmental work authorization.

CNRA obligates USCIS to administer the CW work authorization scheme in a manner "to ensure that Commonwealth employers have access to adequate labor."

Berline said CNRA further requires USCIS to administer the non-immigrant work authorization scheme in a manner to "minimize, to the greatest extent practicable, potential adverse economic and fiscal effects of phasing-out the Commonwealth's nonresident contract worker program and to maximize the Commonwealth's potential for future economic and business growth."

Berline said the defendants were aware that the taxes HKE pays to the Tinian Municipality constitute a significant portion of the revenues collected by Tinian and such revenues reduce the CNMI's burden of funding Tinian.

On Feb. 4, 2013, HKE commenced receiving approvals of some of its petitions granting CW-1 status for the period Jan. 29, 2013 to Jan 29, 2014.

HKE subsequently received approval of 104 petitions covering 559 employees. HKE did not receive any approval for one petition covering 45 waitstaff employees.

Berline said the approvals received in 2013 were based on the petitions HKE submitted in November 2011 for the period 2012-2013.

However, the lawyer said, since USCIS never ruled on the petitions in 2012, the approvals issued covered the period 2013 to 2014.

Shortly after receiving the approvals in March 2013, HKE received a request for evidence for the petition covering 45 waitstaff. HKE timely responded.

Berline said USCIS did not include the 45 waitstaff personnel in any of the CW-1 approvals.

In July 2013, HKE commenced receiving notices of intent to revoke, seeking to rescind the CW-1 approval issued by USCIS in February 2013.

Berline disclosed that the notices of intent sought to revoke approved petitions on grounds that HKE was not a legitimate employer under the CW regulations.

HKE timely filed its response to the notices of intent to deny and to revoke in a single compilation as previously authorized by USCIS.

Berline said USCIS did not take any action on the petitions subject to the notice of intent to revoke until Jan. 2014 when it lifted such notices.

Berline noted that the decision lifting the notices was issued less than one week prior to expiration of the CW-1 status for the employees subject to the notices of intent to revoke.

The lawyer said since the notices of intent to revoke were issued on basis that HKE was not a legitimate employer, USCIS lifting such notices constituted a finding or determination by USCIS that HKE was a legitimate employer for purposes of the CW regulations.

Berline said when USCIS lifted the notices of intent to revoke in January 2014, the case against HKE was pending before in federal court and had been pending before the court since April 2013.

In February 2014, USCIS began issuing notices of intent to deny in connection with the CW-1 renewal petitions filed in January 2014.

The notices sought information relating to payroll, sanitary permits and the Mega Stars transaction.

Mega Stars is a corporation which had entered into an agreement with HKE's owner to acquire ownership, control, and management of HKE.

Berline said in July 2014, HKE commenced receiving notices of intent to deny with all of its CW petitions filed in January 2014.

Berline said the notices reveal that USCIS again questioned whether HKE was a legitimate employer and the eligibility of HKE's employees to renew or receive CW-1 status.

The lawyer said they again sought production of information concerning payroll, sanitary permits and Mega Stars.

HKE was given only 30 days to respond, but USCIS informed the company that it was not allowing to submit a compilation response as previously authorized.

Berline said at no time in 2013 or 2014 did USCIS issue notices of intent to deny based on the criminal case against HKE.

Commencing Dec. 8, 2014, USCIS denied all of HKE's CW-1 petitions.

Berline said for employees seeking to renew their CW-1 status, USCIS denied each of such petition on the principle grounds that Dynasty was not an ineligible employer because of the pending criminal case and each employee was ineligible.

Berline said USCIS allows employees seeking to transfer to work for the proposed employer for the entire time a transfer petition is pending before USCIS even if the date appearing on the transfer employee's I-94 card had expired.

Berline said the denial of Zhong's petition for her renewal is a sample of the denial issued to all 419 HKE employees with renewal petitions.

The lawyer said USCIS' position is that each employee seeking to renew employment with HKE had to stop work and "sit idly" by on Tinian from January 2014 until USCIS ruled on their petitions in December 2014.

Berline said Pukar and the other HKE employees seeking transfer were not deemed to be eligible workers but USCIS denied their petitions on grounds that HKE was not a legitimate employer.

CUC could remove some positions in Rota staffing

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With its current personnel on Rota at 30, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board has recommended that they might be getting rid of some positions that are not necessary.

During a Dec. 18 board meeting, CUC chair David Sablan Jr. learned from CUC Rota resident director Charles Manglona that they need to fill four positions.

Sablan, however, said that the CUC board would move to approve the positions but need to look at the excess positions.

CUC executive director Alan Fletcher said that CUC Rota's office had several positions that were not filled and needed it to be filled because of the staff doing more than one job.

According to CUC human resource director Frankie Cepeda there are a total of 30 positions in the Rota staffing area.

Upon hearing the number of personnel, Sablan asked CUC executives if the personnel would be increased or not.

Manglona said the reason for the increase in the positions is the need of a trade technician for power generation side on top of the three that Rota already has.

Cepeda clarified that there are three Rota personnel doing different jobs in the power generation side so one more staff is needed, which Manglona was requesting for including three other positions needed for a total of four positions.

Sablan and the board members approved the four positions for CUC Rota.

"These are fine because these are critical positions but the overall number, because Rota is less than 2MW in power generation, and there are certain level of personnel that you must have and that is the issue right now. With that amount of people even though the megawatts and demand is not that great. I think you need to look at some of the non-critical positions," Sablan added.

Fletcher told Sablan that with the small standalone system like Rota it is very difficult to run so the staff takes five rotating shifts.

"I am only concerned that there could be excess in the non-essential positions. If we will make some adjustments, we will need less than that number of staff," Sablan said.

"I am prepared to give him (Manglona) those four that he is asking but with the condition that we look at the other excess positions unless Rota's demand grows some positions will be eliminated as the incumbents depart such as retirement or transfer," he added.

Sablan then told Cepeda to make an announcement for one plant operator and a maintenance staff for the power plant and also the hiring of a trades assistant and a trades technician for the water division.

Commerce: No extended sale of alcohol on New Year

Gov. Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider, through the Office of the Secretary of Commerce, announced to all Class-3 On-Sale establishment operators (licensees), that there will be no special granting of extended hours of operation to sell alcoholic beverages up to 4am on New Year's Eve, Dec. 31, 2014.

"Because of the creation of a new Class-7 Special Liquor License under Public Law 17-83, which authorizes a licensed establishment under this class type to operate up to 4am only on weekends and holidays, any interested Class-3 On-Sale establishment who does not currently hold a Class-7 Special Liquor License may apply for this class type of license in order to obtain the privilege of operating up to 4am during weekends and holidays," said Commerce acting secretary Mark Rabauliman.

He said this special notice applies only to Class-3 On-Sale licensed premises. All Class-4 Off-Sale licensed establishments shall comply with their daily authorized hours of sale, which is 7am to 10pm.

For application inquiry, please contact the Alcohol Beverage and Tobacco Control Division at 664-3065. To report a violation of alcohol and tobacco laws, please call the ABTC Hotline at 285-1821. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Admin leave for Executive Branch on Jan. 2

Gov. Eloy S. Inos has granted administrative leave for the Executive Branch this Friday, Jan. 2, 2015. All government offices, except those with critical functions such as the hospital and public safety agencies, will be closed.

Inos also encouraged the Judicial Branch, the Legislative Branch, and all autonomous agencies to grant the same to their respective agencies. ***(PR)***

NAP to issue benefits on Jan. 2

This is to inform the Public that the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP), also known as the Food Stamp Program, will issue benefits on Friday, Jan. 2, 2015, for last names beginning with letters A/B/C from 8am to 3pm, as noted on the NAP newsletter. The NAP Certification Unit will also remain open for renewals scheduled for this day. ***(PR)***

Marpi Landfill closed on Jan. 1

The Lower Base Transfer Station and the Marpi Landfill will be closed on Thursday, Jan. 1, 2015, in observance of New Year's Day. Regular schedule will resume Friday, Jan. 2, and Saturday, Jan. 3, 2015, from 7:30am to 11:30am and 12:30pm to 4pm. ***(PR)***

Route 16 Road repairs

ASAN, Guam—North and southbound inner lanes in the vicinity of Commercial Tire in Barrigada will be closed from Dec. 27-31, as Navy contractors conduct asphalt repairs on Route 16.

Motorists traveling north and southbound are advised to follow all posted signs and speed limits to ensure safety.

Repairs are expected to continue through the end of January.

Schedules and repair activities are subject to change as weather or other conditions permit. The public is encouraged to stay tuned to local media for updates.

For more information, contact the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office at (671) 349-4055/3209. ***(PR)***

Navy training on Farallon de Medinilla

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Navy will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla on Dec. 29-30 from 4:30pm to 9:30pm. The general public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators are advised to stay clear from the area during the date and time indicated. The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 10-nautical mile radius on all quadrants.

Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides frequent access that supports training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities for aircraft in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. ***(PR)***

Costa
Terrace Restaurant
Main Dining
Raraina
December 31,
New Years Eve Gala Dinner
$40.00 per adult | $20.00 per child (ages 5-10)
*Local price available upon presentation of ID
Beverages inclusive of Bottomless Sparkling Wine and Bottomless Beer
December 31,
New Years Eve Count Down
Admission is free to local public
100 seating capacity at the Palmera Beach Bar
Program will start from 9:30pm-12:00midnight
Entertainment: Two Man Band and ARC Soloist
Parlor games and prizes to be given away
Cash exchange coupon booth
* 1 coupon equivalent to $1.00 for beverage orders
* Selected beverages to be offered
Complimentary glass of sparkling wine for all guests who dines at Sunset BBQ and Gala Dinner
Purchase of $25.00 worth of beverages will receive one (1) raffle ticket
Toshikoshi soba will be given away starting from 10:30pm (limited offer)
Costa
Terrace Restaurant
January 1, 2015
New Years Day Brunch
$30.00 per adult | $15.00 per child (ages 5-10)
*Local price available upon presentation of ID
Beverages inclusive of Bottomless Sparkling wine
For reservations, please call Food & Beverage at (670)322-1234 ext 732
APC
AQUA RESORT CLUB
Saipan

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp
Tels: (670) 234-6866 • 234-9447 • 234-7689 • 234-7670
Fax: (670) 234-9021

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
NMHC RFP 2014-006
(This ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD funds.)

To Conduct and Prepare the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

The Corporate Director of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation ("NMHC"), a subsidiary public corporation of the Commonwealth Development Authority ("CDA"), a public corporation of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands, is soliciting sealed proposals in conducting and preparing the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

Proposal packets will be available on Monday, December 22, 2014, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI Holidays.

A mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference is scheduled on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation's Office Conference Room. Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Mr. Jesse S. Palacios, Corporate Director, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 or fax to (670) 234-9021, no later than Tuesday, January 20, 2015, 4:30 p.m., local time.

One (1) original and three (3) copies of the proposal shall be submitted in a sealed enveloped marked/stamped "Confidential" and labeled "NMHC RFP 2014-006", to the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than 10:00 a.m., Friday, January 23, 2015.

The guidelines and specifications for this proposal may be picked up at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, MP 96950 during normal working hours from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except CNMI Holidays. Inquiries may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, or Mr. Jacob Muna, Planning Assistant, at telephone numbers (670) 234-6866 or fax (670) 234-9021.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its respective program Administrative Fees for the Section 8 Multifamily, Housing Choice Voucher, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) provided to NMHC, which functions as the Public Housing Authority (PHA) for the Commonwealth.

The Government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any defects in the said proposals, if in the sole opinion of NMHC, to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation

/s/Herman S. Sablan
Director
Procurement and Supply

Disability ad-hoc committee looks to promote accessibility in CNMI

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An ad-hoc committee consisting of various agencies are looking and discussing ways to promote better accessibility for people with disabilities, most especially in public places, according to Council on Developmental Disabilities executive director Pamela Sablan.

The ad-hoc committee consists of what is called the Developmental Disabilities Network that includes CDD, NMPASI, Northern Marianas College Universities Center for Excellence and Developmental Disabilities, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Public Works, Attorney Generals Office, and other various disability advocates.

Sablan said the reason for the creation of the committee was to promote to the public and educate the CNMI community to have a universal accessibility for everyone including those with disabilities.

Sablan also said that they are trying to plan to meet this coming January since October was their last meeting.

"The group meets and the subject on accessible parking for those with disabilities extended to overall accessibility," she said.

Aside from just the parking areas, the ad-hoc committee were discussing in several ideas for those needing accessibility on public buildings, programs, and services.

"We're working with DPW and they are looking at the building code laws along with the AG's office. We want to get feedback through the public because accessibility is very important," Sablan said.

Sablan noted that one key idea through the ad-hoc committee was the discussion of having children involved with the programs and services.

According to Sablan when asked, some stores don't have that much accessibility and that some stores have improved with accessibility due to self-advocates reaching out to the stores and seeking assistance for a better accessible parking or into the store.

Sablan doesn't know specifically on how many persons with disabilities need the use of wheel chairs, but will bring it up to the ad-hoc committee and other disability advocates.

"So we are looking to meet this January and also try to educate the public on accessibility and educate on the need of having a universal accessibility for everyone," she said.

D&Q DONATES CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Dickerson & Quinn donated food items to non-profit socio-civic organizations Karidat and The Salvation Army recently. Above photo shows D&Q general manager Max Kretzers posing with Julie Temaungil from Karidat while delivering the items. The other photo, meanwhile, shows Kretzers with The Salvation Army's Pastor Wayne Gillespie.

More than a 1K applicants for Spring 2015 under SHEFA

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance received a total of 1,038 valid applications for next year's spring semester, according to SHEFA administrator Merissa S. Rasa.

Out of the 1,038 applications, 33 applicants are from the Northern Marianas Trade Institute.

Rasa said that the 1,038 applications are new, ongoing, or returning applicants.

SHEFA has 359 new applicants, 500 ongoing applicants, and 179 returning applicants.

"Out of these 651 are on-island while 387 are off-island applicants," Rasa said.

In fall 2014, there were about 1,221 valid applications. The turnout for next semester is a little less.

According to Rasa the missing document notices started going out on Dec. 15 to all NMTI applicants and notices will also be sent to both on- and off-island applicants.

"First check request for spring 2015 will be made on Jan. 2. Applicants are encouraged to submit their supporting documents as soon as possible to complete their package for review and have their checks requested early," Rasa said.

Rasa said that they are no longer accepting applications for spring 2015 and wants to remind the applicants that their supporting documents deadline is on Feb. 28, 2015.

Students who turn in their supporting documents will be reviewed early so that they will receive their checks if approved or not.

Meanwhile, Rasa also said that SHEFA's annual report would be completed by Jan. 31, 2014.

Lina' La-ta: A musical odyssey now available on DVD

The University of Guam Endowment Foundation announced the release of the Lina' La-ta: A Musical Odyssey DVD at a press conference on Dec. 15, 2014 at the UOG Student Services Center Rotunda. The Chamorro concert that was held in March of 2014 has been preserved and recorded to DVD to capture Guam's first ever Chamorro concert of this magnitude.

According to Mark Mendiola, executive director of the UOG Endowment Foundation, "The creation of this DVD provides a great opportunity to showcase our island's talent. Part of the University of Guam's mission is to document historic activities, and this is a major historical activity as we place our talented artists on a larger stage within Micronesia."

Music legend and Lina' La-ta artist Johnny Sablan says, "This DVD has it all – a collection of Chamoru Music Artists [who are] songwriters and entertainers, singing of the past, in the present, and for the future! Minagof na kontribusion."

A portion of the proceeds from the DVD sales will benefit the University of Guam's 60th Anniversary Capital Campaign in its mission to help build a 21st century University of Guam campus.

The University of Guam Endowment Foundation appreciates the talent and support from the featured artists on this DVD. The 60th Anniversary Capital Campaign was launched to ensure that the resources at the University will continue to provide a place for young, aspiring, Chamorro artists to hone and develop their craft, and to ensure another sixty years of growth and achievement.

DVDs can be purchased at Payless Supermarkets or at the University of Guam Bookstore. For more information please contact the UOG Endowment Foundation at 735-2955/6/7 or email team@uogendowment.org. ***(UOG)***

DPS sets DUI Sobriety Checkpoints on Dec. 31

The CNMI Department of Public Safety, Commonwealth State Police Division, Traffic Section will be conducting DUI Sobriety Checkpoints on Dec. 31, 2014.

- First checkpoint: 1800-1915 hrs. Beach Road, Garapan in front of the old Wendy's Restaurant, on the northbound lane.
- Second checkpoint: 2030-2145 hrs. Chalan Pale Arnold, Chalan Lau Lau, in front of IT&E, on the southbound lane.
- Third checkpoint: 2230-2345 hrs. Beach Road Susupe, in front of Minatchom Atdao, on the southbound lane.

Each DUI/Sobriety Checkpoint will last at least 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes). This activity is part of the Commonwealth State Police, Department of Public Safety's effort to Deter, Detect and Apprehend impaired drivers, and to ensure that all passengers are wearing proper restraining devices, seatbelts or car seats.

In addition, Traffic and Patrol Officers will be conducting Highway Criminal Interdictions, Saturation Patrols, Aggressive Driver Interdictions, and Laser (Speed Detection) Enforcement. ***(DPS)***

MVA to welcome visiting ships

The Marianas Visitors Authority is preparing to welcome visitors from two ships that will be arriving in Saipan over the holidays.

The MS *Asuka II* will arrive Dec. 31, 2014, at 8am for a one-day visit. The ship is expected to bring 875 visitors to the island, including 488 crewmembers.

On Jan. 1, 2015, the *Nippon Maru* will arrive at 8am, also for a one-day visit. The ship has 450 aboard, including 200 crewmembers.

"We're looking forward to the arrival of these two passenger vessels on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day," said MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas. "As a community, let's do our best to make them feel welcomed and happy for choosing to spend the holidays with us."

As tradition with visiting large passenger vessels and military vessels, the MVA will greet the visiting ships with a local dance troupe during docking. The passengers will also take an island tour while in Saipan. ***(MVA)***

NMC hosts free info session on Jan. 8

Individuals interested in furthering their education and advancing their professional careers are encouraged to attend a free information session hosted by the Northern Marianas College on Thursday, Jan. 8, 2015.

The information session, which is open to all prospective students and community members, will be from 5pm to 6pm in Room D-1 at the college's As Terlaje campus. The topics include the college's new Bachelor's Degree in Business Management, the college, Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program, and other new initiatives.

College faculty, staff, and students from the different degree and certificate programs at NMC, as well as Student Services representatives from counseling, financial aid, and admissions will also be on hand to provide helpful information and answer questions.

The deadline for submitting admission applications on Dec. 30, 2014, but the college is making an exception for those who attend the info session. Those who plan to submit an admission application for the Spring 2015 semester must submit it at the info session.

Those who attend the information session will qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees waived for NMC's upcoming Spring 2015 semester. This represents a savings of about $75.

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in education (emphasis on elementary education, early childhood education, special education, or rehabilitation and human services), bachelor of science degree in business management (new); associate degrees business administration (emphasis on accounting, business management, or computer applications), liberal arts, nursing, natural resources management, criminal justice, and hospitality management. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

For more information about the information session and/or applying to NMC, contact the Office of Admissions & Records at (670) 237-6770, email oar@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

NMIS finishes second place in Christmas tree decorating contest

Northern Marianas International School competed for the first time in the 13th Annual Christmas Tree Decorating Contest at Paseo de Marianas. Out of 14 schools that joined the competition, NMIS won second place and received $3,000 from Country House Restaurant. The design is based from the movie "Frozen" that made the tree extraordinary among other entries.

Christmas ornaments were made from used plastic spoons, forks, food containers, plastic, and empty plastic bottles. The main attraction of the tree is the Frozen character "Olaf" made from used plastic bottles.

Although a neophyte, NMIS also won third place in the Middle School Caroling Competition and went home with $500. They made a tambourine out of used caps from bottled drinks and joyfully sung *Joy to the World* and *Feliz Navidad*. Middle school students were accompanied and conducted by their mentor and musical director Katherine Barja.

NMIS also joined in the Float Competition in the elementary and middle school divisions. They also showcased their unique recycled costumes in the Fashion Show. The students who joined were Vladimir Radge Palma, Edgardo Severin Palma, Angel Lou Buensalido, and Euanne Kyra Claveria.

The overall coordinators of this event were Marge Sugaste, Ramy Salcedo, and Levi Sobremisana.

Jener Pineda, vice principal of NMIS, said that the success of their participation was realized through the unconditional love and support of the whole NMIS community: students, teachers, staff, administration, and of course the parents. ***(NMIS)***

From left, NMIS vice principal Jener Pineda and overall coordinators Marge Sugaste and Levi Sobremisana pose in front of their Christmas tree.

ALTER CITY GROUP

ALTER CITY GROUP *is a renowned and successful international real estate and property development and investment company with offices in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Zhuhai and Headquarters located in Macau. Current key projects include developing, constructing and operating 2 five-star first class integrated hotels and casinos resort, an 18-hole international golf course, a water themed park, VIP villas and other associated facilities complex located at San Jose, Tinian in CNMI.*

Our recent expansion in CNMI has created exciting opportunities and we now invite competent candidates to join us for a challenging career in our growing team within our organization.

OPERATIONS MANAGER
- The role is fundamental to the smooth and businesslike running of the corporate business on a day to day basis
- Responsible for the purchase of materials, plan inventory and ensure operations efficiency
- Responsible and lead for a wide ranging brief – facilities management, people management and finance
- Contribute towards the achievement of company's strategic and operational objectives
- Managing all security and other systems ensuring all procedures are complied with, and appropriate risks are assessed
- Conducting and implementing OM & workflow
- To ensure that the business achieves the required licenses and safety standards to comply with national health, fire and safety regulations thus ensuring the safety of the corporate staff and the public
- Perform quality controls and implement/monitor production KPI's, including setting operational goals to meet
- Manage and implement any software necessary for business growth

OPERATIONS ASSISTANT
- Assist in resolving problems on day to day basis in all operational areas
- Ensure that operational activities are executed within allotted budget, timelines and corporate policy
- Responsible for the execution of the regulations development, procedures and operating instructions tailored to the specific need of the business and addresses such functions as logistics and facilities management, range operations, and administrative requirements, etc.
- Responsible for the management of the supply chain, order processing including thorough documentation
- Maintain database of both internal and external needs
- Prepare responses to correspondence containing routine enquiries
- Other duties as assigned

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
- Develop HR strategy to short and long-range policy and operational issues
- Provides effective human resources guidance and support to the business in staffing, compensation & benefit, performance management, employee relations, orientation, policy/procedure interpretation, organizational design and recognition, etc.
- Manage the development and implementation of staffing strategies to ensure effective recruitment, using practices consistent with company policies and legal requirements
- Act as office manager to oversee and direct administrative service in the organization to ensure facility is equipped with supplies
- Create and operate a reporting system that allows for timely flow of data between regions of the organization
- Budgetary responsibilities include ensuring purchases are within assigned budget
- Performs other duties as assigned

HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANT
- Provide full support to HR Manager by assisting in managing day to day office admin and HR activities
- Assist in managing policies, procedures and conduct internal employee programs
- Maintain and update employee profiles and job specification for each hiring positions
- Hands on in HR Database Management, Legal Compliance/Code of Conduct, Organization Development/Process Improvement, Performance & Career Management, Recruitment & Selection, etc
- Arrange official appointments and meetings, record minutes and distribute
- Manage the office administration system to ensure overall company efficiency, productivity and cost effectiveness
- Any other HR duties as assigned

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING MANAGER
- Plan, execute, and finalize assigned project according to strict deadlines and within budget. Including acquiring resources and coordinating the efforts of team members and third-party contractors or consultants in order to deliver according to plan
- Setting up accounting system for new hotels and provide directions and support to all hotels in the group
- Responsible for full set of accounting including tax returns and independently oversee the financial daily operation
- Administer and monitor the financial system in order to ensure that the municipal finances are maintained in an accurate and timely manner
- Oversee the accounts payable and accounts receivable systems in order to ensure complete and accurate records of all monies
- Prepare monthly statements and financial reports
- Responsible for forecasting and budgeting
- Maintain fixed asset and depreciation registers on a monthly/quarterly basis
- CPA qualification and 8 years minimum related working experience

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT
- Managing bank accounts
- Consolidating annual accounting statements
- Preparing tax returns
- Assisting in any form of auditing
- Reconciling balance sheets
- Preparing financial reports
- Assist in other financial reporting functions when needs arise
- Perform other ad hoc tasks

PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER
- Manage public relations department by planning, directing, or coordinating activities designed to create or maintain a favorable public image or raise issue awareness for the company
- Maintain effective working relationships with local and municipal government officials and media representatives
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with clients, government officials, and media representatives and use these relationships to develop new business opportunities
- Write effective press releases, prepare information for media kits and develop and maintain company internet or intranet web pages
- Identify main client groups and audiences, determine the best way to communicate publicity information to them, and develop and implement a communication plan
- Draft speeches for company executives, and arrange interviews and other forms of contact
- Evaluate advertising and promotion programs for compatibility with public relations efforts
- Assign, supervise and review the activities of public relations staff

PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR
- Engage in promoting or creating an intended public image for the company
- Respond to requests for information from the media
- Write press releases or other media communications for promotion
- Establish or maintain cooperative relationships with representatives of community, consumer, employee, or public interest groups
- Prepare or edit organizational publications, such as employee newsletters or stockholders' reports, for internal or external audiences
- Arrange public appearances, lectures, contests, or exhibits for clients to increase product or service awareness or to promote goodwill
- Perform all other tasks as assigned by management
- Field media inquiries and present proposed responses for management

CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGER
- Correspond with employees and external stakeholders to keep them informed of company developments
- Communicate externally with the media and other interested parties to announce corporate news and discuss organizational changes in a way that attempts to maintain a positive image of the company
- Identify key media opportunities, plan public relations programs, including the preparation of cost budgets
- Present controversy discussions/debates on behalf of the organization to government
- Respond to enquiries from the public, media and other organizations
- Arrange interviews with journalists, prepare and distribute media releases, and liaise with and make statements to the media/public
- Manage the creation and development of print and online advertising, email marketing, web site management and content development, press releases, bylined articles, white papers, corporate videos and any marketing collateral

CLIENT RELATIONSHIP EXECUTIVE
- Assist in developing and execute communications strategy
- Assist in building and maintaining a culture of communications within the business unit and other/external business units
- Assist in implementation of communications projects from conception to completion
- Coordinate with media and event management, provide communication services for external business units
- Track media coverage and provide analysis to the management
- Assist to conduct media materials, reports and proposals in limited time frames

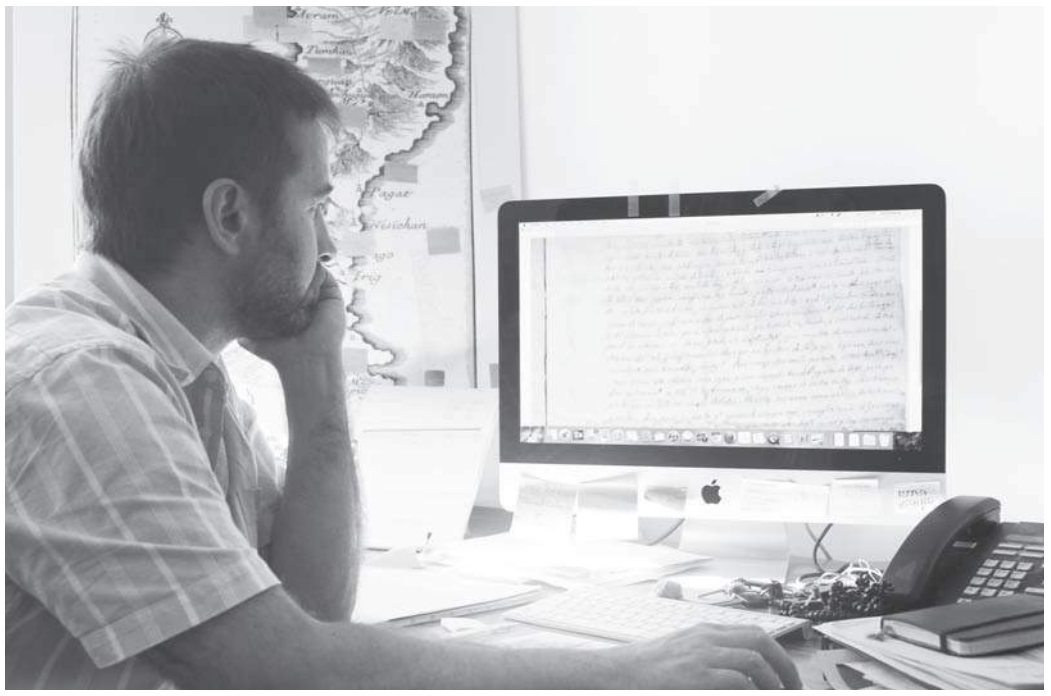
Salary is commensurate with working experience and education. Qualified applicants please e-mail resumes to hr.cnmi@altercitygroup.com
- Alter City Group is an Equal Opportunity Employer
- Alter City Group offers an excellent remuneration and benefits package
- Candidates with local language ability would be an advantage and able to speak Chinese, Japanese or Korean would be a bonus
- For manager position, university/college graduate with minimum 8 years of related working experience and for executive assistant position, degree holder with minimum 5 years
- Excellent in oral and written communications
- Willing to work flexible hours
- Individual must be authorized to work in the U.S. and its territories

Thank you, Si Yu'os Ma'ase and Olomwaay for your interest in working with Alter City Group.

Plumeria Golf & Casino Resort
Tinian, CNMI

UOG to host discussion about 17th century Guam

The University of Guam Anthropology and Chamorro Studies programs are hosting a scholarly dialogue about Chamorros and Jesuit priests living in Guam in the late 17th century. The event begins at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 3 at the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) Lecture Hall and will include a display of Jesuit missionary Fr. Manuel de Solorzano's skull, a presentation from Solorzano's heir and a round-table discussion.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

University of Guam anthropology professor Dr. David Atienza studies letters written by Jesuit priest Manuel Solorzano in the 17th century about his time in Guam.

» Event will include display of Fr. Manuel de Solorzano's skull

Solorzano served as mission superior in the Marianas from 1680 until his death in 1684. His remains and effects were sent back to Spain and have been with his family for 300 years. In late 2013, Solorzano's heirs connected with UOG anthropology professor Dr. David Atienza, and they collaborated to bring the skull and other historical artifacts to Guam.

Solorzano's heirs have also provided the University with digital copies of letters written by Solorzano to his father during his time in the Marianas, offering a glimpse of 17th century Guam. The unpublished letters are being translated by Atienza through the UOG Richard F. Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center.

"This is very special as these letters have not yet been published," explained Atienza. "These letters belong to Guam, and I hope this event will open a dialogue about the time period."

The event is free and open to the public.

Atienza added, "Anyone interested in Chamorro history should attend this event. These artifacts help us to learn about the people that lived during that time. They were people full of passion in every sense." ***(UOG)***

Coast Guard conducts search for man overboard in Pacific

HONOLULU—The U.S. Coast Guard is searching for the master of a freight ship reported overboard approximately 60 miles east of Wake Island Sunday.

Watchstanders at the Coast Guard Joint Rescue Coordination Center were notified at approximately 6 p.m. Saturday, regarding a 49-year-old male Polish national who was reported overboard from the 622-foot freight ship *Toscana*.

The master was last seen at approximately 8 p.m. Friday. Twelve hours passed before the ship realized the crewmember was missing.

An HC-130 Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point was launched Saturday and is staging out of Wake Island to conduct the searches.

The ship retraced its route to search for the missing crewmember, but has continued on to its next port of call in Yokohama, Japan due to fuel limitations.

The Coast Guard is searching for additional vessels in the area that could assist in the search.

The Coast Guard regularly coordinates with DoD, commercial vessels that are part of the AMVER program and international partners to conduct searches in the Pacific where extreme distances often limit the resources immediately available to respond. The 14th Coast Guard District area of responsibility encompasses more than 12.2 million square miles of the Central and South Pacific.

AMVER, sponsored by the Coast Guard, is a unique, computer-based, and voluntary global ship reporting system used worldwide by search and rescue authorities to arrange for assistance to persons in distress at sea. With AMVER, rescue coordinators can identify participating ships in the area of distress and divert the best-suited ship or ships to respond.

Weather conditions on scene are winds of approximately 15 mph, seas of 8 feet and a water temperature of approximately 81 degrees.

For more information, contact the 14th Coast Guard District external affairs office at (808) 535-3230. ***(USCG)***

FROM NATIONAL ACCREDITING TEAM

UOG School of Education receives positive reviews

The University of Guam School of Education (SOE) was recently praised in a preliminary findings report by the Council for Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP). The report found that SOE met national standards in six areas: Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions; Assessment; Field Experience; Diversity; Faculty and Governance and Resources.

A CAEP accreditation team, which included five educators from different states, visited Guam in early December. During the exit interview, the chair of the visiting CAEP team provided the report recommending UOG receive accreditation for all six standards.

"SOE has completed the first step towards reaccreditation," said SOE dean Dr. John Sanchez. "This recommendation will now be reviewed by the national CAEP board for official action in May." SOE first received accreditation in 2006 and most recently in 2011 for three of the six standards.

"The preliminary findings in the CAEP report show the strength of our School of Education. Congratulations to the faculty and staff who worked very hard to meet the rigorous standards," said UOG president Dr. Robert Underwood. "Their hard work during the past three years has paid off."

A team of six SOE faculty worked together to prepare for and pass the review. Dr. Michelle Santos chaired the committee overseeing the accreditation process. Other members included Dr. Catherine E. Stoicovy, Dr. Gayle Hendricks, Dr. Geraldine S. James, Dr. Cheryl Sangueza and Dr. Velma Sablan. The group worked for two years to gather data for the visit and submitted a final report to the accreditation team this summer.

"Not only are we seeing students from the School of Education achieve great things, we are also seeing the faculty and staff excel on a national level," said senior vice president Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez. "Reaccreditation demonstrates that our education programs at UOG are as rigorous, methodical and progressive as larger universities in the United States.

The preliminary findings highlight that the school has improved on data collection in key areas including measuring knowledge, skills, assessments and diversity. Sanchez said some of the improvements are possible because of the online system Livetext. The Livetext system helps students prepare a portfolio, reflect on experiences to build skills and meet standards. The online system also helps faculty gather data and track student progress more easily.

Sanchez said the school continues to see many students do well in authentic assessments, such as writing lesson plans and standard assessments, and SOE students have a 90% pass rate for Praxis exams required for teacher certification.

"SOE will continue to improve teaching and assessment levels," Sanchez said. "There are plans to track the success rate of graduates as they enter the classroom including looking at students' SAT10 scores in classrooms where UOG graduates are teaching."

For more information about UOG School of Education, contact Dr. John Sanchez at jsanchez@uguamlive.uog.edu. ***(UOG)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 30, 2011

Rep. Palacios' arrested for 'ice' trafficking charges

The Legislature suffered a major blow this year when Rep. Raymond Palacios (Cov-Saipan), then the chairman of the House Committee on Education, was arrested in late October during a drug sting operation. He was allegedly caught selling $200 worth of methamphetamine or "ice" to a confidential source of the Drug Enforcement Task Force and Department of Public Safety. Palacios was subsequently released on bail. He pleaded not guilty. At his initial court appearance, Superior Court associate judge Perry B. Inos learned that the 48-year-old Palacios has an outstanding bench warrant issued by the Superior Court on May 5, 2011, for not appearing at a civil case filed by Bank of Saipan against the lawmaker.

Robbers prey on tourists

Robbers preying on poker arcades, stores, and individuals were very active throughout the year, but the latter part of the year saw an escalation in the number of criminals victimizing tourists. While police made a couple of arrests, most of the cases remain unsolved up until now. It started in October when an unidentified man, armed with a screwdriver, robbed a female Russian tourist and took off in her rented car at Suicide Cliff in Marpi. The tourist lost her bag containing over $100 cash, a digital camera worth $1,200, hotel keys, documents, and other items. The victim suffered bruises to the elbows after she fell to the ground during the struggle.

December 30, 2008

Man gets seven days for hitting ex with lighted cigarette

The Superior Court imposed yesterday a seven-day prison term on a man who hit his former girlfriend in the back with a lighted cigarette. Associate Judge David A. Wiseman sentenced Huiliang Gao to one year in prison, all suspended, except for seven days, for assault and battery. Wiseman gave Gao credit for the days he had already served in jail. After completing the prison term, Gao will be placed on a two-year probation. The judge ordered the defendant to write a letter of apology to the victim and required him to perform 200 hours of community service. Wiseman ordered Gao to pay a $200 fine, $25 in court assessment fee, plus probation fee. Gao was charged with three counts of assault and battery, and one count of disturbing the peace.

Extended hours OK'd for sale of liquor

Just for today and the early hours of tomorrow, establishments on the island that serve alcoholic beverages will be allowed to extend the sale of liquor up to 4am of Jan. 1, 2009. The extension will apply only to Class-3 on-sale license holders and does not allow any further expansion of the extended hours, according to a Commerce Department notice issued yesterday. The time extension is being provided in accordance with 4 CMC, Section 5556. These extended hours are only for the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2008, until 4am on Thursday, Jan. 1, 2009.

December 30, 2006

CPA: Asiana's 3 added flights OK for 100 percent incentive

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has no problem granting Asiana Airlines incentives for its added flights from Seoul. "Asiana, based on the current guidelines, qualifies for 100 percent incentive so the board didn't have to act on the request because they [Asiana] get 100 percent automatically," said CPA executive director Clyde Norita in an interview Friday. Asiana Airlines said it submitted last month an application for CPA's new incentive program, which grants 100 percent airport incentive for airlines that launch new flights in fiscal year 2007. Earlier CPA said that Asiana's three added flights, which began on Dec. 26, would not qualify for the 100 percent incentive since they would not come from a different route. All Asiana flights to Saipan originate from Seoul. On Friday, however, Norita said that, based on the board's interpretation of the new policy, Asiana is deemed eligible for the full discounts. "They're qualified but it's only for the new flights," said Norita. Based on the incentive program, the airline gets the 100 percent discount during the first six months of operations. After this period, the incentive would be reduced to 50 percent, which is also an ongoing program for other existing airlines to encourage them to keep flying to the CNMI.

2014 Christmas in the Marianas

PHOTOS By JASON CAMACHO

A Korean tourist family tries out the mochi mixed with sweet red bean soup during the Mochitsuki Festival at last Saturday's 2014 Christmas in the Marianas.

Pacific Islands Club sports, entertainment, activities executive director Glenn Policare hammers the rice in preparation for the mochi.

Paseo de Marianas Promoters Inc. members pound the rice in front of dozens of community members during the Mochitsuki Festival.

Northern Marianas International School takes home $3,000 for finishing second place in the Christmas Tree decorating contest.

Saipan Southern High School wins the high school category for the Christmas caroling competition.

Chacha Oceanview Junior High School wins first place in the float contest.

Green Meadow School staff, students, and their family pose next to their winning tree minutes after being announced winners of the Christmas tree decorating contest.

Green Meadow School's winning Christmas tree took a month to complete and used recycled materials.

Saipan Awadori Team prepares their traditional dance for the Mochitsuki Festival near the largest Christmas tree at the Paseo de Marianas.

Homestay students from KSKK and their host families enjoy the Mochitsuki Festival during the Christmas in the Marianas.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXIV, Issue No. 258

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Obesity as disability

This time of year, endless opportunities to overindulge can test the willpower of anyone who does not want to put on pounds. At the end of the holidays, some people will be congratulating themselves on their self-restraint, while some will feel guilty about giving in and resolve to do better in 2015.

Avoiding obesity is simple in theory, if not easy, and most of us think it should be a matter of individual decisions, with individual consequences. The European Union's Court of Justice, though, wants to ease the burden of bad choices. It recently ruled that obesity may qualify as a disability that employers must accommodate.

The case involved a 350-pound child care worker who said he was fired because of his weight. Although the court didn't resolve his case, it affirmed that though "no general principle of EU law prohibits, in itself, discrimination on grounds of obesity, that condition falls within the concept of 'disability' where, under particular conditions, it hinders the full and effective participation of the person concerned in professional life on an equal basis with other workers ..."

This is not exactly an untried concept. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has interpreted the 2008 amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act to mean obesity can qualify as a condition that has protection against employer discrimination.

So the evolving European policy could very well cross the Atlantic — that is, if it hasn't already. In 2012, a Texas court ruled against a company that fired a 600-pound materials handler without first trying to find ways to help him perform his duties. This year a federal court in Missouri, considering a lawsuit by a man who said he was fired for his severe obesity, agreed that the revised ADA may apply to him.

There are obvious objections to this line of thinking. One is that it flies in the face of what the ADA was meant to do — help people with serious physical and mental impairments, like paralysis and blindness, be productive members of society.

Had Congress wanted to include the obese — and publicize that inclusion to the American public — it could have made that step unmistakably clear. It didn't. The EEOC, however, thinks the 2008 amendments offer enough latitude to suit its purposes.

One problem with its approach is that it could greatly expand the number of people classified as disabled. One in 3 adult Americans is obese, and nearly 7 percent — more than 15 million people — are morbidly obese. A lot of employers might have to undertake costly investments to accommodate their needs. That would be a huge expansion of a law that once appeared to be narrowly targeted.

The expansion is also at odds with the basic idea of the ADA: empowering people who are the unfortunate victims of fate. Obesity is usually the result of individual decisions, and it can be ameliorated by individual decisions. Those facts argue for leaving the government out of this realm.

No one pretends that healthy choices are easy. But the fact remains that people can avoid weight gain, or achieve weight loss, by eating less and exercising more. Blind people, by contrast, can't get their sight back by any form of self-discipline. No amount of willpower can give a paraplegic the ability to walk.

If employers must accommodate the requirements of obese workers, are they also entitled to adopt policies to prevent workers from becoming obese? Could they require all employees to make regular gym visits, or run 15 miles a week, to keep their jobs? Once companies are forced to make changes to benefit individuals with serious weight problems, they will have strong incentives to meddle in personal lifestyles.

Providing exceptional treatment to people with a common, curable condition isn't a good way to encourage self-discipline, which ultimately is the only way to control weight. It's more like a short-sighted indulgence we will come to regret.

© 2014, *Chicago Tribune*

WHEN WE GO TO THE MOVIES, IT'S A MARATHON EVENT!
BOB INSISTS WE SIT THROUGH ALL THE TRAILERS AND CLOSING CREDITS...
NOW PLAYING
CONCESSIONS AND CALORIE COUNTS
AND JAN INSISTS WE READ ALL THE FDA LABELING...
POPCORN
KOTERBA
OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

'Sheng Dan Kuai Le'

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.

Our title phrase is used for "Merry Christmas" in China so I ran down its literal paraphrase knowing that the words used often reveals how a phrase transforms its intended translation. "How are you?" is translated to *ni hao ma* in Chinese. It literally means *ni* = you, and *hao* = good, with the *ma* as an interrogative marker, a question mark (?) in English.

So, *ni hao ma* is a query understood more like "You good, Man?" in Jamaica, or in Uptown Chicago. In our case though, "good" is meant to be a substantive noun, a concrete term like a "lake", rather than a feeling of wellbeing, so to be asked if one was in "good", it means, is one "in the morally enjoyable Jell-O?"

"Happy" as in peace and contentment sounds common in the Zhongwen formula of platitudes but "merry" is more of old English knights alluring their ladies of the court to the dark corners, so how do the Chinese handle "Merry Christmas"? Sheng Dan Kuai Le is the common Christmas greeting.

I do not read Hanzi well enough to read the phrase, nor would I understand it if I saw it, so I went with the verbal one. *Kuai le* = happy, beyond merry-making, as I thought. *Dan* = be born, and *Sheng* = noble, sacred, noted, with the first and third meanings traceable to the old English and French *nobilis* that goes back to Latin's *gnobilis* which eventually relates to the Greek gnosis for wisdom, make "noble birth" an appropriate meaning.

Thus, *Sheng Dan Kuai Le* is "Happy noble birth", not exclusive of Jesus birthday but in fact, it is also a wish at being contented for having sufficient food and receiving a special gift on a specific day. In a more profound sense, it is an affirmation of the nobility of birth itself.

Christmas Day in China confirms the awesome reality of existence, not a belief statement in the redeeming historical sacrifice of a crucified Jew on behalf of the sins of the world in the foothills of Golgotha, as related by Christians in the year-round telling of the birth as incarnation of the infinite into the temporal to the resurrection from the empty tomb, but a grounded assertion into reality rather than the illusory.

The common Chinese phrase used to greet folks on their birthday is s*heng ri kuai le*. *Ri* = this day, is specific to a 24-hour period, so one receives the wish as saying, "enjoy the sanctity of this day!" One's birth is noble, sacred, and notable by the anglicized medieval definitions of the Christ birth, and theologians of our time take each occasion anytime reality intrudes on illusion as word-becomes-flesh (humanly concrete), rendering it as a Christ-event.

A recent article on the Jesus of history once again revived the pessimistic result that accompanied that quest when in our fascination for verifiable knowledge, we launched into the academic quest for the historical Jesus. The enterprise is well intentioned and the result a great corrective to the illusory historicism that accompanies the Gospel stories written more than a generation after the fact, canonized as holy writ two centuries later, but it also points to the worthlessness of reducing the story into historical certitude. It can't nor does it need to be in order to establish the veracity and humanity of its claims.

However, the search for the historical Jesus is not our Christmastide concern as it is the Christmas greeting in China whose absence of familiarity with the story, in spite of the favored Jesuits of Loyola banished from the court for interfering in the affairs of State; and missionaries in their foreign quarters who followed the Qing's unequal treaties; they shared their message along the West's imperialism providing the arrogant raison d'etre for the ecclesiastical structure and practice that messengers came with to accompany their message deliveries.

Because the practical Chinese treat Christmas week as ping an ye (to be safe and sound), close to *ping guo* (apple), the cellophane wrapped apple is widely and visibly abundant.

Nevertheless, someone coined the phrase in our title that nobody understands in the quest for the historical Jesus, nor the Vatican's performances of the rites and rituals that once carried the Christ-word of redemption to the dread-filled Euro-Anglo-American soul, but the bosses at the Chamber of Commerce take the Xmas' renminbi value and injects it into commercial history, making some of Deng Xiao Ping's economic postulants richer than others.

The hawkers at our famed corners of Shenbei prefer "Jingle Bells" and "White Christmas" in their repertoire of Yuletide music, and the imagery of Christmas as a winter holiday fits well into the Snow and Ice Festival of Dong Bei, particularly the one in Harbin north of us where structures are often chiseled to size.

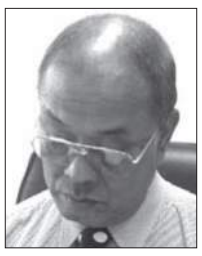
But I will take the Christmas greetings for a good ride this season in its clear and unmistakable affirmation of the nobility of birth universally applied; it leads to the wellness unto life that is the hallmark of writing of this opinion column. Here, have an apple!

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Gi Nuebu Na Sakan

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*



Seguruyu` na gi fina`pos Noche Buena lamegai asuntu ta diskute gi lamasan sena. Deste binibu esta i mana`bubu mesklau i konbetsasion.

Lau i namagof na puntu i dinaña familia gi hilu` satton na inafamauleg. Ta rinueba amesta gi entalu` mañelu yan famaguonta siha. Dispues de tinayuyot ta benefisia priniparan familia na sentada.

Agupa` gi bespiran Añu Nuebu fan daña` ya in` kanta "Tafan Magof Todu". Ilelegña patte este na kantan tradision relihion-ta, "Jesus Yuus mame gi nuebu na sakan gai asi` nu hame apatta i dañu, na`e ni diskansu i man-gaige `sta gi naftan yan ayu seha kassu matai na sakan".

Tafan adiseha dinuebu puede mas antai kinalamtenta gi nuebu na sakan. Despide sensian imbidiu ya ta sedi animosu na finachochu` todus. Felis Añu Nuebo para todus! Si Iku na familia.

Areglun Tanu`

I lumamen ekonomian i tanu mediu rumesponsasapble i federat. Ha utut atoridat Marianas pot immigrasion ni debi u chacha gigigu mona yan nesessidat hutnaleru gi maseha hafa na planun adelantu.

Ala kuenta, hana` utot un` kanai Marianas. Ke lau deste ñgai`an `nai siña i tautau machochu` kabales yan un` kanai? Pues estague` layeye lokue` na mampos bahu kinalamten ekonomia-ta. Estague` na puntu `nai debi u listu i man-ma`gasta umina i dañosu na areglon federat.

Este na puntu debi fuetsau ta ke aregla yan iya Washington `sino kada ratu hit man-mañufa` mattiñgan sin presisu. Mediu obligasion federat umaregla i ekonomian i tanu` segun i kontratan i Covenant. Gi mismu tiempu hita mismu sumen presisu na ta atetuye umaregla mismu halom gima`ta.

Areglon direchon sudadanu

Dos direchon sudadanu `nai sessu man-matompu` i tropan mansabiun hegsu` I Deni`. Era direchon gumai atmas pake yan gumai tanu`. Gaige este na dos direchu prinitetehe ni i mas ma`gas na konstitusion iya America.

I tautau gai direchu dumefende-gue` yan familia. Ayu na mana`e direchun gumai atmas pake. Ni unu u responsapble `an mahatma gima`mu ya guaha mana` iridau `sino mapunu` membron familiamu. Estague` na masede hau gumai atmas pot proteksionmu yan familiamu. Seguruyu` na taya` ni gai konsensia na membron komunidat-ta u usan kinibrutu atmasña solu pot proteksion.

I otru i direchon kada unu gumai tanu` `sino propiadat. Ginen hilu` este na direchu ayu mina` ni unu gai bisnis man-estotba gi propiadatmu. Ni Attikulu Dose tai fuetsa nu este na direchu. Deste ñgai`an `nai un`entrega gobietnamentun Marianas gi disposision tano`mu? Petsonat na propiadat ayu mina` hagu solu siña yan libre dumispone tano`mu.

Man-ñahlalañg

Kada matompu` ya basnag ekonomian i tanu`, ensegidas tafalague i gualu pot para ta nanahuñge mantension familia. Birabirada este ta repite. Yangin kada ratu hit tatte gi dipotsihe tradision natibu hafa na tatnai mana` guaha programan hatdin para ta soyu` familia-ta man-mananom?

Ti hoñgiyun na benefisiu un` tanom choda gi tatten guma` `sino dikiki na luchan kamute yan sune. Dispues gigon sakan, hagu para un` kinisecha tinanom-mu. Chage!

■■■

Chumiliguagua` un` patgon lahe `nai tumalaya si bihuña. Gi karera mona umeyag man-gonaf guihan ginen usun unai. Ileghu na `an echu sutteru ayu na patgon siempre u eyag man-dagau talaya. Gigon mattu guennau na eskalera kontentu siempre i saina sa` ti u ñalañg esta ayu na patgoña. Piot ya umeyag mananom. Mas bintaha para guiya i prohimu. Guiya este i dos offisiu fumañagu tradision fangualu`an natibu!

■■■

Hafaisenyu` un` ñietu hafa na difirensia Chamorro yan Karolinas. Hu esplikaye na i Chamorro impitosu na gigon lalalu` ensegidas sinablasus hau. Dispues de mankahaga` `nai man-a`afaisen dispensu. I Karolinas ha anununsia `an para u lalalu`. Gigon ilegña na siempre "gof lulalu`yu`" maulegña un` kaikai hau. Tatnai sisida un` mana` tailaye.

■■■

Este offisiun "hereru" mafnas esta guine. Uttimu huli`e nu este na cho`chu` un` tihun mame. Magahet na diariu ha soñgge i lilug dispues ha tutuhon umacha ni masu estake ha fotma kau hechuran machete pat ilun kuha pat fusiñus. `Nai madispone ayu na amku` magpu ha` lokue offisiun hereru.

■■■

Mamaisen un` lahen mame hafa na inna` gagasgas i patas guaka. In` esplikaye na para umakadu para haye mumalagu`e. Dispues hu sañgane na ayu na totche bokan mamopble. Ni patas `sino dadalag guaka siempre ma-apprubecha gi fina` kadu. Antes `nai hasan cho`chu` yan fektus, todu finachucho`ña i natibu pot mantension siempre mabenefisia.

■■■

Bastara ke kinahulu` popbleyu`, guaha `nai mattu mahalañg-hu ni asun kusinan sanhiyuñg. Adahe na man-ñge` hinegsa` mana masan hilu foggun guafe. Piot ya un` ha`me guihan pat katne gi hilu` foggun ya un` tunu pat aflitu dispues, mas paire sabotña totchen amotsan taloa`ne `sino sena. I asu ni tat tiha hatme gi halom kusina muna` kusisina i feggun nana. Diberas!

■■■

I modun tautau libianu un` li`e haf` na petsona un` fafana`. Guaha metgot mañan kabron, miron, santulon yan hoñgiyon na Eban. Deste antes, achog amiguhu ni man-dage un` biahe ensegidas hu dispacha piot ayu i gai lala`et manganite. Finu` mañaina haf` hau na klasen tautau gaige gi haye amigumu siha. Pues gef atan kau lobu pot mansu na parientes Lusifet umiririya gi gima`.

■■■

I mas antau gi linala`ta tatnai mapatten adumididi` `sino mameskenuye. Ha inklusu inagofli`e, sensian fiet, yan ma`ug na amesta. Tatnai lokue` huli`e este mabaratura. Todu i tiempu mafattu motmut ginen gineftau yan sinsiyu na minagof korasonta. I gineftau piot para i ti muna` sisiña mit besis na bendision para hita ginen hilu`.

■■■

`Nai mañake i primuhu dagun tautau ha sufan dispues saibog kontentu gi kusinan sanhiyoñg. Ha planta dispues ya kontodu guahu sumaunau chumochu. Ai na pairen agu`on haya.

Dispues, hu faisen para u hahassuyu` gi otru biahe `an ha hale` daguña. Ilegña na manaiña ha` i in` benefisia gi lamasa. Pues hu dispacha kumu finu` lahe. Tres dias malofan hu huñgog na mapresu pot guaha kumeha na i primuhu sumake i dagu. Mana` fan mireseyu` sinake. A` Saina!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Contrary to rational or sound governance

Regarding your report in the Friday, Dec. 26, edition of the *Saipan Tribune* pertaining to Senate Bill 18-52 which proposes to amend certain sections of Public Law 16-51 "the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation Act of 2008," I would like to state that I am adamantly opposed to this legislation as currently drafted as I believe it to be faulty, poorly thought out, and detrimental to the sound and proper governance and management of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation.

I would sincerely hope that members of the House of Representatives perform an intensive review and consideration of this proposed legislation to include convening public hearings and solicit testimony from various content matter experts in the field of Healthcare Governance and Management. I would also ask the members of the House to strongly consider what impact the proposed legislation may or may not have on CHCC's Medicare Conditions of Participation and this significant and vital source of federal reimbursement.

In essence Senate Bill 18-52 seeks to amend the original P.L. 16-51 that created the Healthcare Corporation to change its advisory board to a governing board. Additionally it proposes to amend the board's composition /membership from its current seven voting members, (four governor-appointed members, the corporation's CEO, the corporation's director of Medical Affairs, and the elected representative selected by the corporation's non-physician healthcare professionals) to only five voting members all of which would be appointees of the fovernor.

SB 18-52's negligent and unthinkable removal of any voting representation of CHCC's medical staff would be contrary to rational or sound governance of any healthcare organization. Additionally this would cause negative impact on the ultimate credentialing process of the Medical Staff as now the new "governing board" would be ultimately responsible for the credentialing and Privileging of medical staff without any voting Physician Board member or medical staff representation. This would contravene current standards of practice for medical staff credentialing in healthcare organizations as this is a medical staff guided process.

Senate Bill in 18-52 in Section 1 of its opening paragraph accurately states: "Healthcare is a very complicated and technical industry. In order to develop high quality and efficient healthcare system in the CNMI, it is imperative that a qualified group of individuals rather than one individual make decisions of the Corporation."

Then S.B. 18-52 in section 2825 which establishes the governing board of trustees and their necessary requisites for consideration of appointment states the only educational and experiential background: "Each member shall have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited United States post secondary Institution and three years of management and supervisory experience in the private sector including nonprofit corporations."

I would hope that the members of the House of Representatives or anybody else reviewing this proposed legislation would see the deeply troubling contradiction of the above two paragraphs and return this faulty legislation back to the Senate for revision or reject it outright.

Unbelievably this legislation proposes to set up a governing board of a "very complicated and technical" CHCC comprised of strictly five politically appointees with nothing more that bachelor's degree and three years management and supervisory experience in some non health care or medical related field making the ultimate decisions of the corporation. I really have to question this legislation's concept of "qualified group of individuals" for such a complicated and technical industry.

S.B. 18-52 further goes on in section 2827 to establish stringent education and experiential requirements for all CHCC's Corporate officers, CEO, CFO, director of Medical Affairs, hospital administrator, director of nursing, and director of Community Guidance Center all of which require at a minimum of a master degree and five years experience in upper level health care management and for the DMA a licensed physician with five years clinical practice and three years healthcare management experience.

Under S.B. 18-52 none of these highly trained and experienced healthcare corporate officers would be voting board members and be relegated to taking ultimate direction and governance from a politically oriented board with little or no knowledge of the intricacies of Healthcare organization governance and management.

In the very opening sentence of the findings and purpose section of P.L. 16-51 that created the healthcare corporation to begin with therein is stated the ultimate purpose for seeking to transition the Department of Public Health and CHC out of the executive branch: "The Legislature finds that the healthcare services under the Department of Public Health is not operating as effectively as demanded by the consumers of health care." One can reasonably infer from that statement that DPH/CHC was not able to be adequately managed, governed under the CNMI Government and a bit of dissociation and freedom from excessive political intrusion may allow the new corporation the independence to strive to be more self reliant, efficient, progressive and advance the provision of health care in the CNMI.

S.B. 18-52's attempt to reintroduce political intrusion to the governance and management of CHCC be the way of five member politically appointed governing board especially one in which its membership's education and experiential training would be so ill equipped for the challenges of governance of an evolving healthcare organization would in effect be sending CHCC back into the proverbial dark age.

I for one would say that there was a bit of wisdom on behalf of the 16th Legislature in the drafting of P.L. 16-51 and the establishment of an "Advisory Board" as opposed to a Governing Board at the outset of the creation of the Healthcare Corporation. To me it must be demonstrated that an advisory board may be capable of succeeding at CHCC prior to the transition into any such concept or consideration of a governing board. Any advisory Board should be first demonstrating that it has the experience, expertise, leadership capabilities, to provide for the strategic guidance and oversight of the provision of quality healthcare at CHCC. The Advisory Board needs to first demonstrate that it understands the fine line between organizational governance and micro management and restrain itself from crossing the line from one to the other. Most importantly it must be demonstrated that an Advisory Board be capable of working in cooperation and in conjunction with Management and not denigrate to daily "Brawls" or a battle of egos. I am sorry to say we just are not there yet.

Again, I would ask any/all members of the House and even the Senate to review and consider the oversights and faults of the proposed legislation in S.B. 18-52.

If perhaps any member of the staff of CHCC or any member of the community has concerns with this proposed legislation outlined above I would encourage voicing either support or opposition to your elected officials.

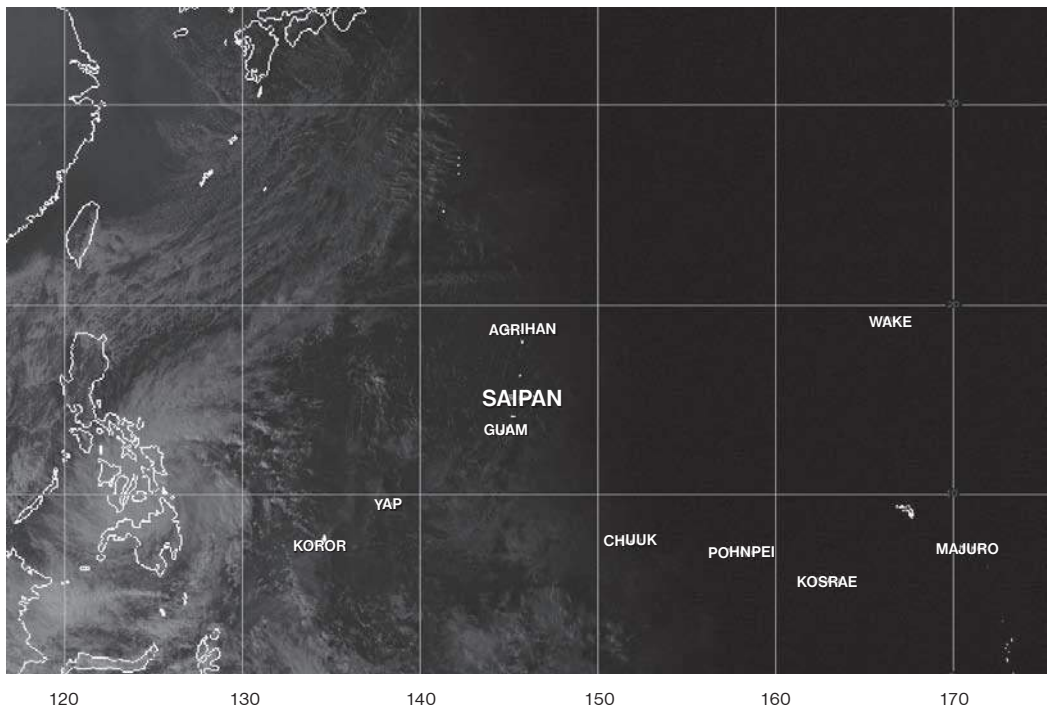
Anthony Raho
CHCC board member

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲87° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2014
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front southeast of Okinawa extends southwestward crossing 25N at 133E and continues beyond 130E at 23N. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found along and northwest of the front.Low-level convergence ahead of the front is also generating scattered showers west of Iwo To Island north of a line from 22N133E to 23N141E. A cold front curves west-southwestward from northeast of Wake Island through 25N176E to 22N165E then continues as a shear line to end near 22N141E. Clouds and scattered showers are present along and north of this boundary to beyond 25N. A series of weak trade-wind disturbances are triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms from well south of Guam to south of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae south of a line from 4N141E to 6N159E to 3N166E. A weak surface trough extends southeastward from 4N173E to EQ178E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring east of Tarawa and Butaritari Atolls south of a line from 4N172E to 4N180E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼80
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼78
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼78
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼80
Pohnpei	Sunny	▲87	▼80
Kosrae	Windy	▲85	▼81
Majuro	Windy	▲85	▼81

Around the Globe

Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲73	▼61
Beijing	Sunny	▲51	▼24
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲66	▼55
Honolulu	Sunny	▲77	▼64
London	Partly Cloudy	▲40	▼31
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲62	▼44
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼72
Melbourne	Showers	▲80	▼54
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲81	▼67
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲54	▼31
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲53	▼40
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲41	▼30
Pusan	Sunny	▲52	▼37
Rome	Sunny	▲44	▼32
Salem	Showers	▲47	▼35
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲57	▼45
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲45	▼28
Tokyo	Rain	▲46	▼37
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲46	▼36

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:40 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
8:08 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.7 Feet
2:28 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
9:48 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Wednesday	6:43 AM	5:57 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:50 PM
Saturday	6:44 AM	5:59 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:10 PM	1:02 AM
Wednesday	1:57 PM	1:57 AM
Thursday	2:45 PM	2:52 AM
Friday	3:34 PM	3:47 AM
Saturday	4:25 PM	4:41 AM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769.
E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2014

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7

SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	1:05am+1	2, 6 via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
7C 3401	4:30pm	8:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764A	1:30am	5:30am	4, 7
MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5069/PR111	2:45am	4:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	7:20am	2, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
DL287/473	6:05am	9:50pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
UA5071/PR111	6:40am	4:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5071/PR111	7:15am	4:50pm	1, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	5 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:50pm	Daily via ICN

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:10am	12:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:40am	12:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:00am	10:35pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	6 via Rota-GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5038	1:10pm	2:40pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5038	1:10pm	1:45pm	2, 4

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4

PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN

DL298	4:30am	3:00pm	3, 7 via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
7C 3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:30pm	5:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763A	4:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 6
MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:55pm	3:10am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA5041	7:35am	6:25pm	1,5 via GUM
PR110/UA5077	7:35am	8:05pm	3, 6, 7 via GUM
PR110/UA5043	7:35am	10:10pm	1, 5 via GUM
DL172/288	9:40am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 7 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:00am	8:05pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	4 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	2 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:59pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:59pm	8:05pm+1	2 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:59pm	10:10pm+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	Daiily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA180/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA180/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1, 5 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA180/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Atlantic City eager for 2015 after its worst year

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)—Few people are more eager to see the clock strike midnight on Dec. 31 than Atlantic City casino executives and the thousands of workers who still have jobs there.

Four of the resort's 12 casinos shut down during 2014 (and a fifth narrowly escaped with a last-minute financing deal just before Christmas), 8,000 workers lost their jobs and casino revenue continued its eight-year plunge.

Several major developments are expected in 2015 that will help shape Atlantic City's future, including the outcome of state efforts to help the struggling resort town, a decision on whether PokerStars can join New Jersey's Internet gambling market, the fate of the former Revel casino and a ramped-up push for a statewide referendum on whether casinos should be allowed in other parts of the state.

"It's got to be better than the year we just had given that we had four closings. In that regard, the worst is behind us," said Tony Rodio, president of the Tropicana Casino and Resort. "But there's certainly a lot of uncertainty with the tax situation and the state legislation, and about market conditions. I'd forecast a better year, but still cloudy."

Kevin Ortzman, president of the Casino Association of New Jersey, said Atlantic City took some bitter but necessary medicine this year.

"Atlantic City experienced big changes in 2014, changes that were very difficult but nonetheless necessary for the greater good of the entire region," he said.

The biggest question heading into 2015: Is the bleeding over? Casino executives and analysts say the remaining eight casinos have a better chance of success now that the market has contracted; "right-sizing" was a frequently used term in 2014 as The Atlantic Club, Showboat, Revel and Trump Plaza closed. In November, the eight remaining casinos saw their revenue increase by 11.5 percent compared with November 2013.

AP

In this photo taken on May 10, 2012, a rolling chair operator walks past the Revel Casino Hotel in Atlantic City N.J. The casino closed on Sept. 2, 2014.

But it's too soon to sound the all-clear signal. Gary Loveman, president of Caesars Entertainment, seemed to put Bally's on notice in October, saying, "We need to make money there."

Wall Street firm Fitch Ratings predicts Atlantic City's casino revenue will dip to $2.6 billion this year (from $2.86 billion in 2013) and decline further to $2.5 billion in 2015.

Sometime in 2015, the state Division of Gaming Enforcement is expected to decide whether to let PokerStars, the world's largest poker website, into New Jersey's online gambling market. The process has been complicated by the company's past legal troubles, but a new owner, Amaya Gaming, and personnel changes are aimed at getting a New Jersey license.

PokerStars, with its huge player following, could breathe new life into the state's Internet gambling market, which took in only about a tenth of the $1 billion many had forecast for its first year of operation. It also would give a boost to Resorts Casino Hotel, which has done without an Internet component for a year while waiting for PokerStars to be approved.

The fate of the former Revel casino hotel remains unclear as well. A Canadian company reached a deal to buy it from bankruptcy court for $110 million but pulled out over a dispute with bondholders over debt from the construction of the casino's costly power plant. A court hearing on a possible sale to the runner-up, Florida developer Glenn Straub, is set for Jan. 5.

Algeria calls for OPEC to cut production

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP)—Algeria's oil minister on Sunday called on OPEC to cut production and raise the price of oil, which has plunged dramatically in the last six months.

The call by Youcef Yousfi to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, of which Algeriaa is a member, comes as the country is struggling to deal with a halving of oil prices from $120 barrel to $60 a barrel.

"For us, OPEC has to intervene to correct the imbalance and cut production to bring up prices and defend the income of its member states," Yousfi said in remarks carried by the state news agency.

While Algeria has some $200 billion foreign reserves, enough to cover imports for the next several years, it is heavily dependent on its oil revenue which provides 97 percent of its hard currency income and 60 percent of the budget.

In a cabinet meeting Tuesday, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika for the first time expressed concern over the "worrisome" situation and made vague promises of cost-cutting.

The first of such austerity measures came Saturday when Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal said there would be a freeze on public sector hiring in 2015. Some 60 percent of the jobs in the country come from the government.

Major infrastructure projects, such as public transportation in Algiers and highways in the countryside are also expected to be put on hold.

Long flush with money from its gas and oil exports, Algeria operates an extensive welfare state.

Subsidies, which amount to 21 percent of the country's annual economic output, cover electricity and many foodstuffs. Gasoline is the cheapest in North Africa.

Residents alarmed as Coast Guard changes foghorns

YORK, Maine (AP)—For Tom Bradbury and his neighbors, the town foghorn is more than just a familiar, wistful noise—it represents something greater, like peace itself.

"There's a sense that someone is on guard, watching over those who are on the water," Bradbury said. "We find it a very pleasing, comforting sound."

That's why Bradbury, of Kennebunkport, and hundreds of New Englanders are sounding the alarm over a Coast Guard plan to convert old-style foghorns to newer technology. The Coast Guard is converting Maine and New Hampshire foghorns that are automated to activate in the presence of fog. It says newer technology activated by mariners via marine radios—which tends to result in fewer of the foghorns' familiar blasts—is safer and more cost effective.

The move has proved unpopular in some Maine communities, and the Coast Guard will soon start a yearlong campaign to inform the public about the conversions. Coast Guard officials said its plan is for the conversions to eventually leave Maine with no more of the old-time foghorn activation systems.

So far the Coast Guard has changed seven foghorns and plans to convert 18 more. The converted foghorns range from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to Maine's Mistake Island, about 50 miles from Canada. The lights slated for conversion are all along the coast.

The Coast Guard hopes to convert the remaining foghorns by the end of 2015, and representatives will spend the year visiting towns along the Maine coast talking to residents about the switch, said Bob Albert, chief warrant officer.

Albert said the conversions replace outdated, unserviceable 1970s technology. He added that the Coast Guard has heard complaints from residents who prefer the older models, but the new system makes it much easier for rescuers to assist mariners, if needed.

"They've indicated their preference to be able to hear the signal to add to the ambiance of living on the coast," Albert said. "Our response to that is, unfortunately, the Coast Guard does not pay for sound signals to add to that."

Opponents of the changeover, including longtime York summer resident Janet Dillon, said the older activation systems were much more frequent, which leaves residents wondering if the newer models are working at all. Dillon collected about 350 signatures from residents who opposed the switch after it happened in June.

Take concerns to your manager, not your co-worker

YOUR OFFICE COACH

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

Marie G. McIntyre is a workplace coach and the author of Secrets to Winning at Office Politics. *Send in questions and get free coaching tips at http://www.yourofficecoach.com, or follow her on Twitter @officecoach.*

Q: Our office team lead is a control freak who keeps all the interesting work for herself. "Angela" and I are both senior medical secretaries in a large hospital. Ever since my assigned doctor left three years ago, I have been given only menial tasks like copying, filing and answering the phone. Angela, on the other hand, continues to support the two remaining physicians.

Since we now have only two doctors, one of them should have been passed on to me. However, Angela obviously decided to keep all the important duties and give me the tedious clerical work. I am bored stiff with this job and hate coming to work every day. What can I do about this?

A: Your frustration with this unexpected downgrade is certainly understandable, especially since more challenging work appears to be available. However, I believe your anger is misplaced. While Angela may enjoy having more complex tasks, it's unlikely that this decision was hers to make. Team leads seldom have that kind of power.

When your assigned physician departed, management had to determine what to do with your position. Logical options would have included laying you off, assigning you to someone else, or creating a new job. Although Angela's input may have been considered, this decision was undoubtedly made by the doctors and the department head.

You say one of the doctors "should have been passed on to me", but that's only your opinion. Because people typically hate changing assistants, the physicians themselves may have insisted on maintaining the status quo. Or management may have simply considered this to be a more efficient arrangement.

Regardless of the reason for your frustrating reassignment, the irony is that you are alienating the very person who might be able to help. If Angela viewed you as a supportive colleague, she could choose to involve you in interesting projects or suggest that your responsibilities be expanded. But if she senses your hostility, she is not likely to promote your cause.

Your circumstances will not improve unless you develop positive relationships with those above you. This starts with your team lead, because the people who control your job get feedback from her. However, three years is a long time to be bored, so if the situation seems hopeless, remember that you always have the power to take your talents elsewhere.

Q: One of the male managers in our department frequently sends emails to a group of female employees. He always begins these communications with the salutation "Girls," which seems demeaning and inappropriate. Should we discuss this with human resources?

A: This guy must be a relic from the 1960s, because that's the last time anyone thought it was appropriate to address mature professional women as "girls." I seriously doubt that he begins his communication to male employees with "Boys."

Because this outdated terminology could be used as evidence of a discriminatory corporate culture, involving human resources is quite appropriate. After providing copies of the offending emails, ask the HR manager to educate this dinosaur about proper 21st-century communication.

Nation

Police boss: Less rhetoric, more dialogue needed

NEW YORK (AP)—A day after the funeral of one of two police officers gunned down in their patrol car, the city's police commissioner called Sunday for a "lot less rhetoric and a lot more dialogue" to defuse the tension between police officers and the population they protect.

Speaking on NBC's "Meet The Press," Commissioner William Bratton said the "pent-up frustrations" that have caused people to take to the streets in recent weeks go far beyond policing policies across the nation.

"This is about the continuing poverty rates, the continuing growing disparity between the wealthy and the poor. It's still about unemployment issues. There are so many national issues that have to be addressed that it isn't just policing, as I think we all well know," he said.

Bratton said rank-and-file officers and much of America's police leadership feels under attack, including "from the federal government at the highest levels."

He urged: "See us. See the police. See why they have the anxieties and the perceptions they have."

Bratton also appeared on CBS' "Face the Nation," where he defended Mayor Bill de Blasio, saying it was wrong for hundreds of police officers to turn their backs to a video monitor outside a Queens church as de Blasio spoke at the funeral of Officer Rafael Ramos.

"I certainly don't support that action," he said. "That funeral was held to honor Officer Ramos. And to bring politics, to bring issues into that event, I think, was very inappropriate."

AP

Police officers hold hands in prayer during the funeral service of New York City police officer Rafael Ramos in the Glendale section of Queens, Saturday, Dec. 27, 2014, in New York.

He acknowledged, though, that the morale of officers is low and said their actions "unfortunately" reflected the feelings of some toward the mayor. Some police officers blame de Blasio for creating an atmosphere of negativity toward the New York Police Department in the city after a grand jury declined to charge an officer in the police chokehold death of Eric Garner on Staten Island.

The gesture at Ramos' funeral came amid contentious contract negotiations with the city. The rank-and-file police union did not claim credit for the symbolic protest, and its head, Patrick Lynch, repeatedly dodged reporters' attempts to ask about it after Ramos' funeral.

It was not clear if officers planned to turn their backs on de Blasio again at the funeral for Ramos' partner. Arrangements for that service have not yet been announced.

The silent protest was a continuation of the defiance shown at a hospital after the officers' slayings on Dec. 20, when Lynch and others turned their backs on de Blasio. Lynch said the mayor had "blood on his hands."

Mayor's 1st year: Liberal victories, NYPD crisis

NEW YORK (AP)—Bill de Blasio, New York City's first Democratic mayor in a generation, is winding down his first year in office, which saw success at fulfilling many of his liberal campaign promises but has at times been overshadowed by events beyond his control, most notably the recent killings of two police officers amid a wave of protests against police conduct.

De Blasio has appeared triumphant against some of those outside forces—notably during the Ebola scare—and has become a national progressive voice, but the police shooting has pushed his young mayoralty into its biggest crisis yet. The double slaying, which came weeks after a grand jury declined to indict an officer in the chokehold death of Eric Garner, has heightened de Blasio's delicate efforts to support arguably his most important city agency, the New York Police Department, yet also defend the rights of the protesters who share his liberal values.

As 2014 draws to a close, his balancing act is teetering. Twice in a week, officers mourning their fallen brothers turned their backs on de Blasio, a searing display of contempt and an omen that de Blasio's struggle with police could cripple his attempts to improve the fortunes of those living at the margins of the nation's largest city.

"It's extraordinarily tense and it's not sustainable," said David Birdsell, dean of the School of Public Affairs at Baruch College. "If the police dominate the headlines and his political capital rather than, say, his plan for affordable housing, it will remain a massive problem."

De Blasio's problems with the police run deep.

Under former mayors Rudolph Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg, the NYPD largely went unchecked for 20 years, its power growing considerably after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. But de Blasio was a different voice, one who wanted to continue the historic drop in crime but prioritized improving relations between police and communities of color.

The unions heard his campaign promise to curb the use of stop and frisk—a police tactic a federal judge ruled discriminated against minorities—not as a criticism of strategy but rather as an assessment of the men and women of the NYPD. After Garner's death, the police unions—which are seeking a new contract—roared against de Blasio's close connections to the Rev. Al Sharpton, a noted police critic.

After the grand jury's decision, de Blasio spoke about cautioning his own son, who is half-black, about contact with police, and he permitted anti-NYPD protesters to march freely. And when the two officers were gunned down Dec. 20 by a man who cited Garner as one of his motivations for violence, the unions said de Blasio had "blood on his hands" for fostering an atmosphere of anger toward police.

De Blasio has sought to lower the temperatures on both sides.

"Let's focus on these families and what they have lost," he said last week. "I think that's the right way to try and build toward a more unified and decent city."

De Blasio made a similar call for unity last New Year's Day.

Out went Bloomberg, the billionaire businessman who reshaped New York with his data-driven management style that made the city safe and glamorous yet economically stratified. In came de Blasio, who took the oath of office in front of his modest Brooklyn home, surrounded by his biracial family.

Arizona police officer killed; suspect dead

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP)—A northern Arizona police officer killed over the weekend was shot repeatedly at close range by a domestic violence suspect after calmly asking the man if he could pat him down for any weapons, authorities said Sunday.

Flagstaff Officer Tyler J. Stewart, 24, died Saturday at Flagstaff Medical Center shortly after being shot multiple times.

Stewart had responded to a domestic violence call from the suspect's girlfriend at about 11 a.m. Saturday, police Sgt. Margaret Bentzen said. The woman told the officer she had an argument with Robert W. Smith, 28, and that he had left the area.

Stewart later found Smith at an apartment complex where he questioned the man but "at no time did the conversation become confrontational," Bentzen said in a statement.

When Stewart asked the suspect if he could check him for weapons, Smith pulled a gun from his pocket and opened fire on the officer from about 2 feet away, according to the statement.

Stewart did not have time to return fire, and Smith continued to shoot the officer repeatedly even after he had sustained serious wounds and was on the ground, Bentzen said

Smith then walked away and fatally shot himself, she said. He died at the scene.

The investigation remained ongoing. Authorities said Smith was arrested in 2009 by Flagstaff police for a domestic violence incident.

Stewart is the second Flagstaff police officer to be killed in the line of duty. On June 21, 2000, Officer Jeff Moritz, 30, was killed after he pulled over a teenager who was driving around his neighborhood in a truck playing loud music.

Stewart had worked at the department for less than a year. He was a graduate of Boulder Creek High School in Anthem, Arizona, near Phoenix, and later attended Concordia College in California, police said.

"This is an enormous tragedy for our department and the family of our officer. We are a very close knit organization, and know that all members of the Flagstaff Police Department are grieving at this time. With that being said, all of the men and women of the Flagstaff Police Department extend our prayers and condolences to the family of our Officer Tyler Stewart," Chief Kevin Treadway said in a statement.

5 dead in apartment building fire near San Antonio

CASTLE HILLS, Texas (AP)—Five people died Sunday after a fire broke out at a senior-living apartment building in the San Antonio suburb of Castle Hills, authorities said.

Ten other residents of the Wedgwood Apartments remained hospitalized and an unknown number were unaccounted for Sunday evening, according to Bexar County Fire Marshal spokeswoman Laura Jesse.

A total of 150 firefighters from San Antonio and six other fire departments responded to the blaze, which was reported shortly after 6 a.m., San Antonio Fire Department spokesman Christian Bove said.

The cause of the three-alarm fire at the 11-story high-rise is under investigation, but it appears to have originated on the third floor, Jesse said. The fire, which has been extinguished, left some "significant damage," she said.

Not all of the 216 residents listed on the building's rent rolls have been accounted for, Jesse said. It was not immediately clear how many of those residents were inside during the fire, she said. Jesse said residents are not required to check in or out of the building, which also has commercial tenants.

About 150 residents were taken by city buses to a local high school, and some family members waited at a makeshift shelter in the cafeteria for word of their loved ones. Others residents were taken to a hotel.

Property manager Entrada Management Services was arranging for the residents' stays "if they don't have anywhere else to go," Jesse said.

The names of those killed in the fire have not been released.

Asia

Indonesian official: Prospects bleak for missing jet

SURABAYA, Indonesia (AP)—Search planes and ships from several countries on Monday were scouring Indonesian waters over which an AirAsia jet carrying 162 people disappeared, and more than a day into the region's latest aviation mystery, officials doubted there could be anything but a tragic ending.

AirAsia Flight 8501 vanished Sunday in airspace thick with storm clouds on its way from Surabaya, Indonesia, to Singapore. The search expanded Monday, but has yet to find any trace of the Airbus A320.

"Based on the coordinates that we know, the evaluation would be that any estimated crash position is in the sea, and that the hypothesis is the plane is at the bottom of the sea," Indonesia search and rescue chief Henry Bambang Soelistyo said at a news conference.

First Adm. Sigit Setiayana, the Naval Aviation Center commander at the Surabaya air force base, said 12 navy ships, five planes, three helicopters and a number of warships were taking part in the search, along with ships and planes from Singapore and Malaysia. The Australian Air Force also sent a search plane.

Searchers had to cope with heavy rain Sunday, but Setiayana said Monday that visibility was good. "God willing, we can find it soon," he told The Associated Press.

The plane's disappearance and suspected crash caps an astonishingly tragic year for air travel in Southeast Asia. The Malaysia-based carrier's loss comes on top of the still-unexplained disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 in March and the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in July over Ukraine.

At the Surabaya airport, passengers' relatives pored over the plane's manifest, crying and embracing. Nias Adityas, a housewife from Surabaya, was overcome with grief when she found the name of her husband, Nanang Priowidodo, on the list.

AP
A search and rescue officer points to a co-ordination map of Indonesia at the crisis center set up by local authorities in search of the missing AirAsia flight QZ8501 at Juanda International Airport in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia, Monday, Dec. 29, 2014.

The 43-year-old tour agent had been taking a family of four on a trip to Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia's Lombok island.

"He just told me, `Praise God, this new year brings a lot of good fortune,'" Adityas recalled, while weeping.

Nearly all the passengers and crew are Indonesians, who are frequent visitors to Singapore, particularly on holidays.

Flight 8501 took off Sunday morning from Indonesia's second-largest city and was about halfway to Singapore when it vanished from radar. The jet had been airborne for about 42 minutes.

There was no distress signal from the twin-engine, single-aisle plane, said Djoko Murjatmodjo, Indonesia's acting director general of transportation.

The last communication between the cockpit and air traffic control was at 6:12 a.m. (23:12 GMT Saturday), when one of the pilots asked to increase altitude from 32,000 feet (9,754 meters) to 38,000 feet (11,582 meters), Murjatmodjo said. The jet was last seen on radar at 6:16 a.m. and was gone a minute later, he told reporters.

Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia launched a search operation near Belitung island in the Java Sea, the area where the airliner lost contact with the ground.

US, NATO mark end of 13-year war in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The war in Afghanistan, fought for 13 bloody years and still raging, came to a formal end Sunday with a quiet flag-lowering ceremony in Kabul that marked the transition of the fighting from U.S.-led combat troops to the country's own security forces.

In front of a small, hand-picked audience at the headquarters of the NATO mission, the green-and-white flag of the International Security Assistance Force was ceremonially rolled up and sheathed, and the flag of the new international mission called Resolute Support was hoisted.

U.S. Gen. John Campbell, commander of ISAF, commemorated the 3,500 international soldiers killed on Afghan battlefields and praised the country's army for giving him confidence that they are able to take on the fight alone.

"Resolute Support will serve as the bedrock of an enduring partnership" between NATO and Afghanistan, Campbell told an audience of Afghan and international military officers and officials, as well as diplomats and journalists.

"The road before us remains challenging, but we will triumph," he added.

Beginning Jan. 1, the new mission will provide training and support for Afghanistan's military, with the U.S. accounting for almost 11,000 of the 13,500 members of the residual force.

"Thanks to the extraordinary sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, our combat mission in Afghanistan is ending, and the longest war in American history is coming to a responsible conclusion," U.S. President Barack Obama said in a statement issued in Hawaii, where he is on vacation with his family.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who took office in September, signed bilateral security agreements with Washington and NATO allowing the ongoing military presence. The move has led to a spike in violence, with the Taliban claiming it as an excuse to step up operations aimed at destabilizing his government.

ASIAN BRIEFS

S. Korea offers talks with N. Korea over unification

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea on Monday proposed talks with North Korea to discuss what it calls a range of issues needed to prepare for the unification of the divided countries. It's unclear if Pyongyang would accept Seoul's offer as the country has viewed any of South Korea's unification plans an attempt to take it over. North Korea wants a unified Korea with Pyongyang in charge. Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae told a televised news conference that South Korea wants talks in January to discuss exchange programs, joint projects and laws needed for a unified Korea. Ryoo said South Korea hopes the proposed talks would also discuss resuming reunions of families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War.

Scaffold collapse at Beijing school kills 10

BEIJING (AP)—A scaffolding collapse at a Beijing high school Monday morning killed 10 people and injured four, Chinese state media reported. The official Xinhua News Agency said the accident occurred at Tsinghua High School in the city's northwest. A high school official with the surname Jiang told The Associated Press that all the victims were workers building a school gymnasium. He said no teachers or students were involved. The official said rescue crews were waiting for equipment able to lift heavy debris before they could clear the site.

3rd blogger detained in Vietnam in a month

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—Vietnamese police have detained a third blogger in a month in the latest crackdown on dissent in the communist country. Blogger Nguyen Dinh Ngoc, 48, was taken into custody and his house was searched in the southern commercial hub of Ho Chi Minh City on Saturday. The Ministry of Public Security said in a statement that police were investigating and will deal with Ngoc in accordance with the law, but did not elaborate. Over the past month, police in Ho Chi Minh City detained two other bloggers for alleged anti-government postings.

SIDEBAR

Missing flight is 3rd Malaysia-linked incident

The disappearance Sunday of AirAsia Flight 8501 was the third air incident this year involving Malaysia, where budget carrier AirAsia in based. Here's a look at the two other disasters, as well as the latest missing flight, which went missing with 162 people aboard less than an hour after taking off from Surabaya, Indonesia, for Singapore.

MALAYSIA AIRLINES FLIGHT 370

The disappearance of the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 on March 8 triggered one of modern aviation's most perplexing mysteries. Flight 370, carrying 239 people from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, vanished without a trace, sending searchers across vast areas of the Indian Ocean. An initial multinational operation to locate the wreckage far off Australia's west coast turned up empty, without a single piece of debris found.

After a four-month hiatus, the hunt resumed Oct. 4 with new, more sophisticated equipment, including sonar, video cameras and jet fuel sensors aboard three ships that will spend up to a year in a desolate stretch of the sea, about 1,800 kilometers (1,100 miles) west of Australia.

The 60,000-square-kilometer (23,000-square-mile) search area lies along what is known as the "seventh arc"—a stretch of ocean where investigators believe the aircraft ran out of fuel and crashed, based largely on an analysis of transmissions between the plane and a satellite.

Officials initially ruled out terrorism, but conspiracy theories have endured. Until the wreckage is found and examined, it will be impossible to say for sure what happened to the plane.

MALAYSIA AIRLINES FLIGHT 17

All 298 passengers and crew aboard Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 were killed when the Boeing 777 was shot down over rebel-held eastern Ukraine on July 17.

The plane was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur when, according to Dutch air crash investigators, it was likely struck by multiple "high-energy objects" that some aviation experts say is consistent with a missile strike.

Hunks of the wreckage were transported to the Netherlands by trucks and will be reassembled in a hangar. However, international teams seeking to retrieve remains and salvage evidence have had difficulty reaching the crash site due to clashes between Ukrainian government troops and Russian-backed separatist rebels. Six victims have yet to be identified.

A high-ranking rebel officer has acknowledged that rebels shot down the plane with a ground-to-air missile after mistaking it for a Ukrainian military plane. Russian media, however, claim the plane was shot down by a Ukrainian jet.

The Dutch Safety Board's final report may rule out one or the other scenario, but it will not seek to attribute responsibility.

Dutch prosecutors, meanwhile, are coordinating an international criminal investigation into the downing, but have yet to name any suspects or say when or how charges might be brought.

AIR ASIA FLIGHT 8501

An Indonesia AirAsia flight with 162 people aboard, most of them Indonesians, disappeared Sunday over the Java Sea, triggering a search involving several Southeast Asian nations.

Contact with Flight 8501 was lost about 42 minutes after the single-aisle, twin-engine A320-200 jet took off from Surabaya airport in Indonesia for Singapore.

It was not immediately clear whether it had any satellite tracking devices on board.

Malaysia-based AirAsia, led by Malaysian businessman Tony Fernandes, has dominated cheap travel in the region for years. AirAsia Malaysia owns 49 percent of its subsidiary, AirAsia Indonesia. It said the plane was on the submitted flight plan route when the pilots requested deviation due to weather before communication was lost.

AirAsia, which has a presence in most of Southeast Asia and recently in India, has never lost a plane before and has a good safety track record.

World

1 dead, hundreds stranded in Greek ferry disaster

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Hundreds of passengers and crew endured a second night of smoke, frigid temperatures and gale-force winds as they waited to be evacuated from a burning ferry adrift early Monday in rough seas between Italy and Albania. At least one person died and two were injured in the risky rescue operation.

The Italian coast guard said 201 of the 478 people on the ferry, sailing from the Greek port of Patras to Ancona in Italy, had been evacuated by early Monday. Most were airlifted by helicopter to other merchant vessels sailing nearby, though a few were flown to hospitals in southern Italy to be treated for hypothermia.

"It will be a very difficult night. A night in which we hope we will be able to rescue all on board," Greek Merchant Marine Minister Miltiadis Varvitsiotis said in Athens.

He said 10 merchant ships were in the area assisting rescue efforts, and that those who had already taken on dozens of passengers from the stricken ferry would remain in the area until the operation was over. Only then would it be determined where they would go, Varvitsiotis said.

AP

In this photo taken from a nearby ship, vessels try to extinguish the fire at the Italian-flagged Norman Atlantic after it caught fire in the Adriatic Sea, Sunday, Dec. 28, 2014.

Nevertheless, officials in the Adriatic port of Bari were preparing for the first large group to arrive early Monday—some 49 people. They were initially expected in Brindisi down the coast, but rough seas forced a change of plans, officials said.

The fire broke out before dawn Sunday on a car deck of the Italian-flagged Norman Atlantic, carrying 422 passengers and 56 crew members. Passengers huddled on the vessel's upper decks, pelted by rain and hail and struggling to breathe through the thick smoke, passengers told Greek media by phone.

"We are outside, we are very cold, the ship is full of smoke," passenger Giorgos Stiliaras told Greek Mega TV.

He recalled people being awakened by "the smell of burning plastic" and that the heat from the fire felt like the floors were "boiling."

The president of the Brindisi Port Authority, Hercules Haralambides, said the passengers were still out on deck after midnight, but that blankets had been provided by rescue crews from the Brindisi-based St. George navy ship, which was leading the rescue.

The ferry was last inspected by the Patras Port Authority on Dec. 19 and six "deficiencies" were found, but none were so grave as to keep it in port, according to the report on the European Maritime Safety Agency's website.

The deficiencies involved a "malfunctioning" fire door as well as "missing" emergency lighting and batteries and defective "watertight doors."

The ship manufacturer, Carlo Visentini, was quoted by the ANSA news agency as saying that only one of the 160 fireproof doors was found to be problematic in the inspection and that it was located above the fire zone. Visentini said the problem was fixed immediately to the satisfaction of the inspectors.

Italy and Greece sent navy and coast guard vessels and helicopters to the extensive rescue operation, while nearby merchant ships lined up to form a barrier to protect the ferry from towering waves. As darkness fell, Italian Defense Minister Roberta Pinotti said rescue operations would continue through the night.

The Italian Coast Guard, which was coordinating the rescue operation, said those flames visible from the outside of the ship had been extinguished by about 8:30 pm (1930 GMT), about 16 hours after the blaze began. But the ferry was still enveloped in dense smoke, which the Coast Guard probably said was being fueled by some hotspots inside the ship.

Varvitsiotis described the efforts as "one of the most complex search and rescue operations we have dealt with in recent years."

An Italian Air Force helicopter pilot said smoke was invading the helicopter cabin, making rescue even more challenging.

"With the wind, smoke entered into the helicopter cabin, acrid smoke," Maj. Antonio Laneve told Italian state TV. Some of those they were trying to rescue were very frightened of being hoisted up by helicopter given the adverse weather, he said.

Nine of those evacuated were taken to the Italian town of Lecce, authorities said. Of those, three children and a pregnant woman were treated for hypothermia in Lecce hospital. Dr. Raffaele Montinaro said the children were in "excellent" condition, and emergency room doctor, Antonio Palumbo, said the mother's condition was also good.

"For sure they are scared," said Eligio Rocco Catamo, manager of the Copertino hospital. "But I should say that I was impressed by the calm and the serenity they are showing."

A local convent was housing survivors who were released from the hospital.

Malaria killing thousands more than Ebola in West Africa

GUECKEDOU, Guinea (AP)—West Africa's fight to contain Ebola has hampered the campaign against malaria, a preventable and treatable disease that is claiming many thousands more lives than the dreaded virus.

In Gueckedou, near the village where Ebola first started killing people in Guinea's tropical southern forests a year ago, doctors say they have had to stop pricking fingers to do blood tests for malaria.

Guinea's drop in reported malaria cases this year by as much as 40 percent is not good news, said Dr. Bernard Nahlen, deputy director of the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative. He said the decrease is likely because people are too scared to go to health facilities and are not getting treated for malaria.

"It would be a major failure on the part of everybody involved to have a lot of people die from malaria in the midst of the Ebola epidemic," he said in a telephone interview. "I would be surprised if there were not an increase in unnecessary malaria deaths in the midst of all this, and a lot of those will be young children."

Figures are always estimates in Guinea, where half the 12 million people have no access to health centers and die uncounted. Some 15,000 Guineans died from malaria last year, 14,000 of them children under five, according to Nets for Life Africa, a New York-based charity dedicated to providing insecticide-treated mosquito nets to put over beds. In comparison, about 1,600 people in Guinea have died from Ebola, according to statistics from the World Health Organization.

Malaria is the leading cause of death in children under five in Guinea and, after AIDS, the leading cause of adult deaths, according to Nets for Life.

Ebola and malaria have many of the same symptoms, including fever, dizziness, head and muscle aches. Malaria is caused by bites from infected mosquitoes while Ebola can be contracted only from the body fluids of an infected victim—hence doctors' fears of drawing blood to do malaria tests.

People suffering malaria fear being quarantined in Ebola treatment centers and health centers not equipped to treat Ebola are turning away patients with Ebola-like symptoms, doctors said.

WHO figures from Gueckedou show that of people coming in with fever in October, 24 percent who tested positive for Ebola also tested positive for malaria, and 33 percent of those who did not have Ebola tested positive for malaria—an indication of the great burden of malaria in Guinea.

Honduras kids see better life on soccer field

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP)—The project that Luis Lopez created a year ago on a dusty soccer field in a rough neighborhood of Tegucigalpa is doing well.

It's been six months since any of the 50 children who train with Lopez two hours a day, five days a week, has been murdered in a country where nearly 1,000 children were killed this year. None has left the team to migrate to the United States, where in 2014 border authorities arrested more than 8,000 Honduran children as they tried to reunite with parents working there.

Nor have they joined the street gangs that control their neighborhoods, using children to collect extortions, store and sell drugs and even commit murder.

This is progress in a neighborhood called Progreso, albeit one so fragile Lopez is hesitant to celebrate.

Lopez started the program to keep younger kids from joining adolescents who gathered around the dirt patch to smoke marijuana, sniff glue and recruit youngsters to run errands for the gangs.

When the small California-based Kahl foundation learned about Lopez's program using soccer to help children out of the violence, it sent money to upgrade the field, buy equipment and rent buses so the children could travel around Tegucigalpa to play other teams.

"My purpose was to focus on youth development where there is an individual passionate about a specific cause, whether it is life skills or positive change, specifically through sports," said Doug Kahl, the foundation's president.

Now the children talk about their soccer team at school and to friends in other neighborhoods, who flock to the island of peace in the capital of a country with the highest murder rate in the world.

"The field has created a group, comfort, friendship. It gives them a place to belong, something to care about, something they don't want to lose," said Lopez, known affectionately as "Luisito."

The tough guys have retreated since a new fence and bleachers were built. But Lopez knows they are not far away and that his own influence may not hold beyond the fencing.

One November afternoon, neighborhood kids were returning from a game aboard a bus, enthusiastically clapping and singing to a video of a popular reggaeton song, "Cute Girls."

"Most cute girls would die to have a bad boy," the song says, talking about pulling the girl's hair and denigrating her. "I know you like those things ... I have to shoot, insult you, lose my senses, hit you to be able to love you."

WORLD BRIEFS

Palestinians pushing for UN vote on Israeli withdrawal

JERUSALEM (AP)—The Palestinians are pressing for a U.N. Security Council vote this week on a resolution that would call for an end to Israel's occupation within three years. A resolution with such a timetable is almost certain to be rejected by the Security Council—either by a failure to get the minimum nine "yes" votes required or by a veto from the United States, Israel's closest ally which insists there must be a negotiated solution to the conflict. Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said a draft resolution would be submitted to the Security Council on Monday. A vote could be set for Tuesday. Jordan's U.N. Ambassador, the Arab representative on the Security Council, has said repeatedly that Jordan wants a consensus resolution agreed to by all 15 council members.

Bahrain Shiite leader detained for questioning

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP)—A lawyer for the leader of Bahrain's largest Shiite opposition group said Sunday that Sheik Ali Salman is being held by the Interior Ministry, which is accusing him of inciting hatred against the government and calling for its overthrow by force. His lawyer Abdullah al-Shamlawi told The Associated Press that the accusations refer to speeches that Salman gave between 2012 and now. Scattered clashes broke out Sunday evening between protesters and government forces after the al-Wefaq group said its secretary general, Salman, was detained by criminal investigators after more than 12 hours of questioning without his lawyer.

Focus

Yes-We-Can president faces twilight of maybes

By JULIE PACE and NANCY BENAC
ASSOCIATED PRESS

This Nov. 14, 2014, file photo shows President Barack Obama boarding Air Force One at Yangon International Airport, in Yangon, Myanmar.

AP

WASHINGTON (AP)—It was supposed to be a joke. "Are you still president?" comedian Stephen Colbert asked Barack Obama earlier this month.

But the question seemed to speak to growing weariness with the president and skepticism that anything will change in Washington during his final two years in office. Democrats already are checking out Obama's potential successors. Emboldened Republicans are trying to push aside his agenda in favor of their own.

At times this year, Obama seemed ready to move on as well. He rebelled against the White House security "bubble," telling his Secret Service detail to give him more space. He chafed at being sidelined by his party during midterm elections and having to adjust his agenda to fit the political interests of vulnerable Democrats who lost anyway.

Yet the election that was a disaster for the president's party may have had a rejuvenating effect on Obama. The morning after the midterms, Obama told senior aides, "If I see you moping, you will answer to me."

People close to Obama say he is energized at not having to worry about helping—or hurting—Democrats in another congressional election on his watch. He has become more comfortable with his executive powers, moving unilaterally on immigration, Internet neutrality and climate change in the last two months. And he sees legacy-building opportunities on the international stage, from an elusive nuclear deal with Iran to normalizing relations with Cuba after a half-century freeze.

"He gained some clarity for the next two years that is liberating," said Jay Carney, who served as Obama's press secretary until this spring. "He doesn't have as much responsibility for others."

Still, pillars of Obama's second-term agenda—gun control, raising the federal minimum wage, universal pre-school- seem destined to stand unfulfilled. Wrapping up the Iraq and Afghanistan wars isn't turning out to be nearly the tidy success story Obama once envisioned. Even supporters say one of the president's top remaining priorities may have to be simply preventing Republicans from dismantling his earlier accomplishments, including the health care law.

The Yes-We-Can man is entering a twilight of maybes, his presidency still driven by high ambitions but his power to achieve them running out.

Before the midterm election results arrived, Obama's advisers say, the president realized he would finish his presidency with Republicans running Capitol Hill.

Whatever message the Democrats' defeat sent about the president's own standing, Obama concluded the status quo meant more gridlock.

Indeed, 2014 had been another year of fits and starts for a White House that has struggled to find its footing in Obama's second term.

The feeble HealthCare.gov website stabilized, but scandal enveloped the Department of Veterans Affairs. Syria got rid of its chemical weapons, but a violent extremist group pulled the U.S. back into military conflict in the Middle East. The unemployment rate fell, but so did Obama's approval ratings—to the lowest levels of his presidency, worse than the second-term averages for most recent presidents.

"I don't care who you are, after eight years or six years of the presidency, your influence has eroded," said Robert Dallek, a historian who has met periodically with Obama. "Even someone like Eisenhower or Reagan, you just can't sustain it."

While White House officials acknowledge the presidency has challenges in its waning years, they say recent economic gains and executive actions on immigration and climate change show Obama still can exert considerable influence.

"This year the president's policy successes vastly outstripped his political successes," said Dan Pfeiffer, a senior White House adviser.

Nearly two dozen White House officials, former Obama aides, presidential historians and political analysts discussed Obama's standing as he closes his sixth year in office, some on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss their conversations with the president or his top advisers.

For much of the year, Obama appeared to struggle with the realization that his political standing had slipped.

He publicly complained about criticism of his foreign policy by pundits in Washington and New York (his private gripes were more colorful and profane). Despite Democratic pleas to stay out of November's elections, he said his policies were indeed on the ballot. He desperately sought to break free of the confines of the White House.

One afternoon in June, he joined his chief of staff in making an impromptu Starbucks run on foot, leaving aides and reporters sprinting to catch up.

"Bear on the loose," the president's advisers jokingly said. They said it was good for his mood to break free from the bubble.

But there were also real concerns in the West Wing about his behavior. Not only was he trying to escape the ever-present press, but Obama was ordering his Secret Service detail to keep its distance.

In 2014, Obama also went back to war in the Middle East. Less than three years after the last American troops left Iraq, Obama sent U.S. forces back to train and assist the country's security forces in fighting Islamic State extremists. By fall, the U.S. was launching airstrikes against the militants in Iraq and Syria.

As he announced the strikes, Obama promised Americans this time would be different from the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. No U.S. combat troops would on the ground, he said.

But he seemed to be trying to reassure himself as much as anyone else.

In public and in private, Obama appears to understand his presidency may end on a war footing. He's been reading "Redeployment," a collection of short stories about the Iraq war by former Marine Phil Klay. Shortly before Christmas, he made an unusual visit to a military base in New Jersey to thank troops and their families—and pledge to preserve hard-fought military gains abroad.

Obama is realistically optimistic about what he can get done over the next two years, advisers say. He wants to try tax reform and sees opportunities to accelerate growth and job creation with the economy on firmer footing. Aides have reached out to historians and political scientists to solicit ideas for Obama's next State of the Union address, including fresh ways to address income inequality.

"They have reasonable expectations," said Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam, who spoke with White House aides about income inequality before the election. "It is the sixth year, after all."

A big question hanging over the White House is how much Obama, whose charisma once charmed the world, can still shape the national debate.

"There's almost always a point of diminishing returns on a president's words," said Jeff Shesol, a former presidential speechwriter for Bill Clinton.

Indeed, the president is forging ahead as something of an isolated figure.

December's debate over keeping money flowing to the government showed Democrats in Congress won't hesitate to go their own way. In recent weeks, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York has questioned the timing of Obama's 2010 health care law. House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi pronounced herself "enormously disappointed" that Obama embraced a spending bill she saw as a GOP attempt at blackmail. And Sen. Bob Menendez, the outgoing Senate Foreign Affairs Committee chairman, began work with Republicans on new penalties against Iran—against Obama's wishes.

Inside the White House, Obama's tight inner circle of loyal advisers keeps shrinking.

The trio of political gurus who helped run his presidential campaigns—David Axelrod, Robert Gibbs and David Plouffe—have long since moved on. As has onetime chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, now the mayor of Chicago. Other longtime aides, including Pfeiffer and deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes, are said to be eyeing exits. Bringing in fresh talent is becoming a greater challenge. Obama may have to navigate this challenging phase of his presidency without a full stable of trusted advisers with whom he's comfortable.

Many Democratic operatives are also more interested in spots on Hillary Rodham Clinton's potential presidential campaign than joining an administration entering its twilight. In some instances, it has been hard for the White House to get prominent Democrats to publicly back Obama's policy decisions, particularly on foreign affairs, until they know Clinton's position. Clinton is widely expected to announce a bid for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Obama is trying to branch out. He started keeping his version of a bucket list: the names of authors, business leaders, innovators and others he wants to bring to the White House for a private lunch or dinner. Some who have visited: inventor and business tycoon Elon Musk, historian Doris Kearns Goodwin and AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson, a major Republican donor.

Obama has opened up his social circle beyond a core group of friends from Chicago and his childhood in Hawaii.

He's become close to former NBA basketball player Alonzo Mourning, who has hosted fundraisers for Obama's presidential campaign. Former football player Ahmad Rashad, who dated senior presidential adviser Valerie Jarrett earlier this year, worked his way into the president's golf outings and joined the first family on vacation in the Florida Keys and Martha's Vineyard.

ESPN host Michael Wilbon, an occasional golf partner, said Obama displayed an astounding "ability to compartmentalize" amid the past year's frustrations.

"A lot of successful people have to have that, but not like the president," Wilbon said.

Obama admits to being distracted at times. Asked how much sports he watches on TV, the president told ESPN this month, "There are times I will admit at night, when I've got a really fat briefing book, where I might have the game on with the sound off."

Less than halfway through his presidency, Obama reflected on how being in office had left him "all dinged up."

The vaunted "hope" posters from his 2008 campaign are "all dog-eared and faded," he said at a fundraiser three years later.

He was searching for ways to recreate the energy of 2008. Heading into his final two years in the White House, that challenge is greater.

While Obama and his team talk a good game about opportunities ahead, they've been here before: Plunging into a new year full of energy and ideas, only to run smack into Washington gridlock.

Signs that Obama's presidency is closing are all around.

Within weeks, the race to replace him will begin in earnest. Democrats are lining up to endorse Clinton, though she's yet to declare her candidacy.

By spring, a committee of Obama friends and advisers will announce which city will host his presidential library. Honolulu, Chicago and New York are in contention.

People close to Obama say he is weighing what he will do when he leaves the White House at the relatively young age of 55. He is studying the paths his predecessors have taken and has expressed interest in working on both domestic and international issues. He is considering ways to expand mentoring programs he started for young black men in the U.S. and emerging leaders in Africa and Asia.

"He's going to have a very unique opportunity and ability to reach young people not only here but in other countries," said Jon Favreau, Obama's longtime speechwriter who left the White House last year.

It is less clear where Obama and his family will go after their time in the White House ends. They own a red-brick, Georgian-style home in Kenwood, a neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. Their oldest daughter, Malia, graduates from high school soon and has been looking at colleges in California. The president is said to be drawn to the idea that he could blend in more easily in bustling New York.

Obama is already imagining life with fewer restrictions.

Asked in a New Yorker interview earlier this year whether he would want to be a judge, Obama said that sounded a bit "too monastic."

"Particularly after having spent six years and what will be eight years in this bubble, I think I need to get outside a little bit more."

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW

Toyota Camry defies reputation

By SUSAN CARPENTER
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

MCT

The Camry XLE comes with a responsive and intuitive touch-screen navigation system. A 10-speaker JBL audio system, heated leather seats, LED daytime lights and a moon roof are also included.

As a critic, there are certain cars that inspire an obligation to review them, rather than a true desire. The Toyota Camry was squarely in that category. Despite its status as the best-selling passenger vehicle in the country for 12 years running, the ubiquitous family sedan was so lacking in character, it was an automotive wallflower.

Then I drove the 2015 update, inadvertently proving the maxim that expectations are a person's worst enemy. Like the stealthy 850-horsepower Camry dragster Toyota trumpeted at this year's SEMA show, the new Camry is quite the surprise.

Gone is the dull-as-dirt profile, at least from the front. Every version except the $23,795 base model gets a wide-mouthed honeycomb mesh grille that riffs off the alluring Lexus spindle of Toyota's luxury sub-brand, along with slivered headlights that are available with modern LEDs. Even the paint on my test vehicle was finished with a hint of glamour: In bright sun, the black paint sparkled with a glittery blue and silver.

Finally, there's a Camry that wants to be more than an everyman's just-get-me-where-I'm-going commuter and actually make that commute more fun.

Granted, I was loaned the most high-end Camry to test – the sporty XSE, which comes with a 268-horsepower 3.5-liter V-6 (and an $8,400 premium over base). Available in four versions, the new Camry can also be had with a 178-horsepower 2.5-liter 4-cylinder and Toyota's calling card—a hybrid that yields up to 43 mpg, according to EPA estimates.

A sports car the Camry HSE is not, but it's off-the-line power is impressive. So much for my wallflower theory. It easily accelerated, whether it was from a freeway onramp into speeding traffic or from a dead stop. Stomp it too hard, however, and its front-wheel drive made itself apparent. There's a bit of torque steer to contend with, but the electronic power steering easily recovered.

The Camry's longstanding lack of pizazz wasn't lost on Toyota's engineers for its 2015 redo. The HSE is one of the two available versions that is sport-oriented and outfitted with paddle shifters that are best operated in "sport" mode managing the six-speed automatic transmission. Toyota's wannabe Ferrari mode even blips on the down shifts, though drivers will need to pay attention to hear them.

Across all versions, the body has been stiffened, the suspension finessed for better absorption of asphalt inconsistencies. On the HSE, the MacPherson struts out front and multi-link suspension in the rear have been upfit with faster coil springs for better responsiveness. Still, I wouldn't say its handling is truly cut out for the canyons. The Camry doesn't effortlessly sashay. Despite seats that are somewhat bolstered on the HSE, I was aware of the car's weight transferring from side to side, and my body along with it.

Now in its 33rd model year, the Camry started out as a compact sedan when it first came on the market and has since grown into a wider-bodied midsize. For 2015, it's grown ever so slightly more, adding 1.8 inches to its overall length. Toyota says it re-engineered about 2,000 parts on the car – the roof was the only piece that was left untouched.

One of the Camry's biggest goals with the update: a more premium experience enabled through upgraded style and technology. The interior of my test vehicle was finished in plush, touch-me ultra suede in basic black offset with red threadwork that Toyota calls "French-stitched," though what's French about it is unclear. It was so surprisingly nice looking that my 11-year-old literally cooed when he opened the passenger door for the first time.

Inside, the Camry defied my expectations for fit and finish. The ultra suede had a softening effect on the swaths of black plastic in the dash and door panels. And its seats were comfortable and roomy, even in the rear, where there was a decent amount of space for long femur bones with the front seats pushed all the way back.

At speed, the cabin was fairly quiet. Toyota added more noise-damping carpet in 2015, though some road sounds continue to seep in. Wind noise was more successfully mitigated with improved window and door seals and a revised side mirror shape designed to reduce air turbulence and its rustling, whistling effects. At least it wasn't so loud that I felt inspired to turn up the radio.

In the Camry, that radio is controlled with a 7-inch touch screen surrounded by the usual array of buttons to control the audio, navigation and other functions, though the buttons themselves were inordinately large and topped with equally oversized and redundant knobs for the stereo.

Situated just beneath those controls is a cubby that houses the usual USB port and 12-volt power outlet, as well as a first for the midsize sedan segment – a wireless charger for certain brands of smartphone.

Technology being a growing buyer consideration in cars, the Camry is dripping with it. A backup camera is standard equipment on every version except the base model. The pre-collision, lane-departure and radar-based adaptive cruise control are a reasonably priced $750 option. The blind-spot monitor and cross-traffic alert cost an extra $500.

As a bundle, all of the driver-assistance features in the Camry are a lot more intuitive than the VW Touareg I tested last week, which needed an extensive tutorial just to figure out how they worked.

On the Camry, they are unobtrusively built in and easily managed with buttons on the leftmost portion of the dash.

The blind spot monitor works like so many others, lighting up in orange on the far outside corner of the side mirrors each time a car wanders into the driver's blind spot. The lane keep assistant works in reverse—beeping whenever the driver is about to stray from the lane and showing, in no uncertain terms on the dashboard right in front of the driver, which side of the lane is about to be violated.

Forward collision alert allows drivers to adjust the amount of distance they'd prefer before the car goes into high alert, beeping with urgency that a crash is nigh. In my long weekend with the new Camry, the forward collision alert only kicked in once—when I was about to hitch my front end to the back of a Lincoln Navigator on the 405—and it prompted the desired effect of imploring me to stomp the brake pedal.

The front end really is too pretty to mess up on the 2015 Camry, which, as a whole, impressed.

UNDER THE HOOD

Ignition coil could be your culprit

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Q: About two years back my engine began to shudder and lose power at times. My trusted mechanic quickly determined the cause was a defective ignition coil and replaced it. All has been fine until this past week when the same issue reared its head again. When doing the original work, my mechanic didn't replace all of the coils as all except the defective one were OK at the time. I'm wondering if another one of them has now gone bad. Since my mechanic has retired I'm wondering if I could fix this myself. The engine light is also on.

—Patty Warner

A: Patty, it sounds like you've done a great job identifying and comparing the two engine performance symptoms and may be on the right track with your ideas.

Your engine is apparently equipped with a coil-on-plug ignition system, which is pretty much the norm for modern engines. Mounting individual ignition coils directly atop the spark plugs eliminates parts and potential problems found on older distributor type systems that delivered a spark from a single coil via the distributor cap, rotor, and plug wires.

COP ignition coils come in basically two versions, those containing an integrated ignition control module (three or four connecting wires) and those that don't (two wires). The ignition control module, wherever it's located, performs the critical task of switching the coil(s) on and off at precise times based on signals from the powertrain control module. COP systems are very reliable, but the ignition coils can sometimes leak spark via defects/damage in the plastic housing or spark plug boot, to nearby engine metal.

Your first step in fixing this is to buy or borrow a basic OBD-II scan tool such as the Autel MaxiScan MS309 at Amazon.com for $24. It's amazing these tools have become so inexpensive! The scan tool will display the diagnostic trouble code stored and a freeze frame showing engine/vehicle conditions at the time the check engine light illuminated. You will likely find a code such as a P0302. This example indicates a misfire in cylinder No. 2. Since your check engine light appears to be on steady rather than flashing, the misfire is likely occasional rather than severe. Scan tools often list trouble code definitions or you can simply Google them. The website www.obd-codes.com does a great job explaining definitions and possible causes.

I normally frown on throwing parts at a car to fix problems, but your engine contains a built-in parts department. Swapping the ignition coil of the indicated cylinder with the one next door could not be easier if they're readily accessible. Removal usually consists of removing an attaching nut and the wiring connector and lifting the coil from the spark plug, installation is the opposite. I'd then use the scan tool to clear the trouble code and drive the car under the conditions indicated in the freeze frame until the check engine light again illuminates. After parking, check to see if the current code is perhaps now a P0303. If so, this means the misfire followed the coil you swapped to cylinder No. 3. In this case renewing the now-No. 3 ignition coil will fix the misfire. If the current code still indicates cylinder No. 2, the fault lies elsewhere and will likely require professional expertise to fix.

I should add that when evaluating a typical diagnostic trouble code in situations other than this, resist the temptation to replace the component mentioned in the code description unless further testing confirms it is defective.

Life & Style

Jazz great Buddy DeFranco dies at age 91

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP)—Renowned jazz clarinetist Buddy DeFranco, who led the way on his instrument in the transition between the swing and bebop eras, has died at the age of 91, his family said Friday.

DeFranco's family told The Associated Press that the famed musician died Wednesday evening at a Panama City hospital. His wife, Joyce, said he had been in declining health in recent years. The couple lived in Panama City.

DeFranco, who began his professional career as a teenager in the late 1930s, made both concert and recording appearances with many of the top singers and musicians of his era, including Frank Sinatra, Billie Holiday, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, Oscar Peterson and Art Tatum.

"We have received condolences from around the world," said Joyce DeFranco. She said her husband's influences on music will last long beyond his lifetime.

"Buddy DeFranco almost single-handedly was the clarinetist who moved the harmonic and rhythmic language forward from where Benny Goodman left off into the much more adventurous territory of bebop and beyond, while never forgetting his roots in swing music," said leading jazz clarinetist Ken Peplowski in an email to the AP. "He was also unfailingly kind and supportive to every other clarinetist who came after him."

Born in 1923 in Camden, N.J., DeFranco was raised in South Philadelphia and began playing the clarinet at age 9. By age 14, he had won a national Tommy Dorsey Swing contest and began his road career in 1939.

DeFranco said his favorite clarinetist at the time was Artie Shaw, who led his own big band.

"Artie Shaw was way ahead of most clarinetists and most jazz players," DeFranco said in a 2007 interview for the National Endowment of the Arts.

In the 1940s, DeFranco appeared in top swing bands led by Gene Krupa, Charlie Barnet and Tommy Dorsey. In 1950, as the big band era was in decline, he joined the Count Basie Septet.

Meanwhile, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie were leading a modern jazz revolution, and DeFranco became excited about the improvisatory freedom in the new style known as bebop after hearing Parker play at Minton's club in Harlem.

"When I heard Charlie Parker, I knew that that was going to be the new wave, the new way to play jazz," said DeFranco in the 2007 NEA interview. "From that point on, I was sold with ... the idea of bebop. But that presented another problem with the clarinet because ... it was much more difficult to play. It was treacherous in many ways as far as fingering and articulation."

In the 1950s, DeFranco performed with Parker, Gillespie and other bebop legends. He formed his own quartet with drummer Art Blakey, pianist Kenny Drew and bassist Eugene Wright, and toured Europe with Holiday in 1954. Jazz at the Philharmonic producer Norman Granz paired DeFranco with pianists Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson for memorable recordings.

AP

In this Jan. 13, 2006 file photo, Jazz legend Buddy Defranco, left, shares a laugh with fellow jazz legend Freddie Hubbard during the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Awards Concert where they were honored, in New York.

DeFranco performed at leading venues around the world and was repeatedly recognized as the top jazz clarinetist in magazine polls conducted by Downbeat, Metronome and Playboy.

DeFranco never lost his affinity for swing music, and led the Glenn Miller Orchestra from 1966 to 1974. He also worked extensively in the studios and on television, and had his own show, "The Buddy DeFranco Jazz Forum" on public television.

He formed a lasting musical partnership with vibraphonist Terry Gibbs and they recorded a series of albums in the 1980s and 1990s. DeFranco made more than 160 recordings.

The Cuban-born jazz clarinetist Paquito D'Rivera credits DeFranco with helping keep the jazz clarinet legacy alive when younger musicians were shunning the instrument because of its difficulty to master in modern jazz.

"He was not only a great artist, but a very elegant gentleman with a great sense of camaraderie," D'Rivera said in an email.

In 2007, DeFranco was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master, the nation's highest jazz honor.

"Charlie Parker and Art Tatum to me were genius, and I'm right below that," DeFranco said in the 2007 NEA interview. "I did in my own way do something different on the instrument and that's the way I'd like to be remembered."

DeFranco's family asked that contributions in his memory be made to the non-profit Buddy DeFranco Jazz Festival which is held each spring at the University of Montana in Missoula.

DeFranco is survived by his wife and his son, Chad.

Creator of 'Tail! Spin!' talks about power, truth

NEW YORK (AP)—One had a "wide stance" and another was "hiking the Appalachian Trail."

Those were some of the excuses put forward by politicians caught in recent sex scandals. Mario Correa, a political junkie who worked on Capitol Hill in high school and college, has turned them into comedy gold.

Correa, a co-host of Entertainment Weekly's daily "News & Notes" program on SiriusXM, stitched together four such sad tales to create "Tail! Spin!" at the Culture Project starring "Saturday Night Live" alumna Rachel Dratch. It closes Jan. 4.

The show skewers former U.S. Sen. Larry Craig of Idaho, former U.S. Rep. Andrew Weiner of New York, former U.S. Rep. Mark Foley of Florida and former South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford, who is now a congressman. All were ensnared in sex scandals and initially feigned innocence.

The script uses only the public comments, tweets, statements, instant messages, emails and text messages from the disgraced politicians. The Associated Press asked Correa about the play's deeper meanings.

AP: How much were these four men representative of the politicians you encountered?

Correa: To me they were outliers. They fascinated me because, in my eyes, they had it all. I mean, what am amazing honor it is to be a member of Congress or to be a U.S. senator and have all this responsibility in your hands. And then to go and do these stupid things, it always struck me as `Why?'

AP: Some of the texts and messages in the play are pretty lurid.

Correa: There's worse and there's more. We had to keep it rated R and not NC-17. There's no dearth of material when it comes to congressional sex scandals.

AP: You even incorporated cooking recipes, TV appearances, Clinton-era voting records and speeches. How hard was it to dig?

Correa: I sometimes say Google is my collaborator. I fell into a lot of Internet wormholes. One thing will lead you to another. You'll find a strange Larry Craig recipe somewhere and it will lead you to a link of him somewhere at a Spanish-American cook-off. It was so clear to me watching his behavior that something more fundamental was happening there and I tried to juxtapose that with his public persona in a way that I hope works.

AP: Beyond the humor, what can we take away from the play?

AP

This 2014 photo provided by Richard Kornberg & Associates shows, from left, Nate Smith, Arnie Burton, Rachel Dratch, Sean Dugan, and Tom Galantich in a scene from "Tail! Spin!" at the Culture Project in New York.

Correa: What I take away from it is: The truth in politics comes out, whether you're talking about a substantive policy issue or whether you're talking about sex lives that are very different in private than someone's voting behavior. I think in any political situation, the truth will come out.

AP: In each case, the fumbled cover-up was more excruciating than the hypocrisy. You're exploring more than just randy politicians, right?

Box Office: 'Hobbit' wins, 'Interview' has strong VOD sales

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Audiences had their pick of genres during the Christmas weekend, but despite a host of fresh arrivals, splashy holiday fare like "Unbroken" and "Into the Woods" proved no match for "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies."

"The Interview," meanwhile, wowed with $15 million from its over 2 million online rentals and purchases.

The final installment in Peter Jackson's trilogy marched to the top spot once again with an estimated $41.4 million take across the weekend ($54.5 including Christmas day earnings), according to studio estimates Sunday.

Universal's World War II epic "Unbroken" took second place with $31.7 million from the weekend, bringing its domestic total to $47.3 million from its first four days in theaters.

"We're all thrilled," Nikki Rocco, Universal's president of domestic distribution said of the Angelina Jolie-directed drama. "It's a testament to how great this movie is. I'm so happy that America found out about it."

Added Rentrak's senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian: "The story of Louis Zamperini really offered a nice alternative for moviegoers who weren't looking for a fantasy world, a musical or a family film."

Disney's musical "Into the Woods," boasting a star-packed cast and a PG rating, came in a close third with $31 million, and $46.1 million across the four-day period. It replaced "Mamma Mia" as the biggest opening for a screen adaptation of a Broadway musical ever.

AP

This photo released by Disney Enterprises, Inc. shows Meryl Streep as the Witch in a scene from the film, "Into the Woods." The movie opened in theaters Dec. 25, 2014.

"To be able to take (Stephen) Sondheim and (James) Lapine's work and make it available to a mass audience? It's a great holiday gift in and of itself," Disney's distribution Executive Vice President Dave Hollis said.

The rest of the top five was populated by holdovers "Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb" and "Annie" and which earned $20.6 million and $16.6 million, respectively, in their second weekend in theaters.

"Their opening numbers didn't really set the world on fire, but, as we thought, they would play well over the Christmas holiday," Dergarabedian said.

Sony's "The Interview" earned $15 million from online rentals and purchases through Saturday. The movie took in $2.8 million from 331 theaters since its opening on Thursday, and $1.8 million of that came from the weekend.

"I'm so grateful that the movie found its way into theaters, and I'm thrilled that people actually went out and saw it," said writer, director and star Seth Rogen in a statement.

"We are very pleased with how it is doing both theatrically where we are seeing numerous sell-outs across the country, and online where it remains at the top of many charts" added Rory Bruer, Sony's president of worldwide distribution. In just four days, "The Interview" became Sony's most successful online film of all time.

Other weekend debuts include Paramount's $25 million crime drama "The Gambler," which took seventh place with a middling $9.3 million from 2,478 theaters. The Weinstein Company's "Big Eyes" earned only $2.97 million over the weekend from 1,307 screens and $4.4 million from the four-day. The haul is a career low for director Tim Burton compared with his other wide-release openings.

In limited release, Clint Eastwood's fact-based Iraq war drama "American Sniper" opened in four locations, taking in a phenomenal $610,000. The staggering $152,510 per-theater average is second this year only to "The Grand Budapest Hotel."

Ava DuVernay's Martin Luther King Jr. drama "Selma," meanwhile, opened in 19 locations to $590,000 over the three-day weekend for a solid $31,053 per-theater average. The film expands nationwide on Jan. 9.

Dergarabedian thinks that less impressive debuts, such as awards hopeful "Big Eyes," could find an audience in the coming weeks.

"It's just very, very crowded out there," Dergarabedian said. "The audience wins, though. There is so much choice out there. If you can't find a movie to your liking in this lineup, then you just don't like movies."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. Where available, the latest international numbers are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. **"The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies,"** $41.4 million ($89.2 million international).
2. **"Unbroken,"** $31.7 million ($2.7 million international).
3. **"Into the Woods,"** $31 million ($1.6 million international).
4. **"Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb,"** $20.6 million ($30.3 million international).
5. **"Annie,"** $16.6 million ($5.9 million international).
6. **"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay—Part 1,"** $10 million ($7.9 million international).
7. **"The Gambler,"** $9.3 million.
8. **"The Imitation Game,"** $7.9 million ($400,000 international).
9. **"Exodus: Gods and Kings,"** $6.8 million ($31 million international).
10. **"Wild,"** $5.4 million.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to Rentrak:

1. **"The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies,"** $89.2 million.
2. **"Exodus: Gods and Kings,"** $31 million.
3. **"Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb,"** $30.3 million
4. **"The Taking of Tiger Mountain,"** $25 million.
5. **"Big Hero 6,"** $24.7 million.
6. **"Penguins of Madagascar,"** $16.1 million.
7. **"P.K.,"** $14.3 million.
8. **"International Market,"** $14 million.
9. **"Paddington,"** $12 million.
10. **"Love on the Cloud,"** $10 million.

Sony film mess reflects gadgets-entertainment gap

TOKYO (AP)—Sony's iconic gadgetry and the star appeal of Hollywood may have appeared to be a perfect match when the electronics giant bought Columbia Pictures in 1989. A quarter century later, it's apparent that Sony Corp. has not attained the magic synergy it was hoping for.

The stolid silence of Sony's Tokyo headquarters over the hoopla surrounding Sony Pictures Entertainment's "The Interview" underscores the long-standing divide between the Japanese parent company and its U.S.-led and -run motion pictures subsidiary, successor to Columbia Pictures.

Marrying the cultures of Sony Corp., a quintessentially Japanese company, and its Hollywood studio was such a challenge that company founder Akio Morita and his successor as chairman, Norio Ohga, never really tried, analysts say. Instead, they left Sony Pictures to mostly run itself.

"They're separate businesses run by separate management," said Damian Thong, a senior analyst at Macquarie Capital Securities (Japan). "Since the late 1990s it's been run basically as a stand-alone business."

Sony Corp. in Tokyo refused requests for comment on developments related to "The Interview," referring all inquiries to Sony Pictures in the U.S. After first withdrawing the movie from a planned Christmas release on as many as 3,000 screens, Sony Pictures made the movie available on various digital platforms Wednesday, a day after Sony and independent theaters agreed to release it in over 300 venues on Christmas.

AP

In this May 22, 2014 file photo, Sony Corp. President and Chief Executive Officer Kazuo Hirai speaks during a press conference at the Sony headquarters in Tokyo.

There were no plans to release the movie in Japan, even before hackers objecting to its satirical portrayal of an assassination of North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un staged a massive cyberattack on Sony Pictures.

As entertainment has shifted to digital delivery systems, technology analysts say it has become increasingly clear that Sony botched an opportunity to outdo Apple in creating a far more influential and valuable business from melding its consumer electronics expertise with ownership of a major movie studio and recording label.

"It feels like there has been a lot of fumbling and a lack of coordination there for too long," said Rosenblatt Securities analyst Martin Pyykkonen. "They really haven't won in anything in a long time when they could have been a leader in terms of bringing devices and technology together. So shame on them."

The lack of integration between Sony's main divisions carries throughout the group and is among the reasons why the once iconic electronics giant has fallen behind, says Sea-Jin Chang, author of "Samsung vs. Sony" and a business professor at Singapore University.

Looking back, Chang believes Sony's 1989 acquisition of Columbia Pictures was mainly a trophy purchase driven by Morita's personal whims.

"They made all the possible mistakes they could make in an acquisition," Chang said. "It was driven by ego. It suffered from bad implementation. If you teach a class on M&A (mergers and acquisitions) this is the case study on how not to do it," he said.

Sony's top executives have generally refrained from meddling in the moviemaking process, giving Sony Pictures an autonomy that allows the studio creative leeway. But in turn the Sony brand has not gotten much exposure through the films it produces.

"To be fair, I don't think there has ever been that much of a synergy in the sense that a Sony picture has ever sold a Sony product in a meaningful way," Thong said.

Twenty or 30 years ago, that didn't matter so much. But now that Sony Corp.'s overall brand appeal has faded, it needs all the help it can get.

Sony Pictures has its ups and downs but has been a relatively strong performer in recent years, with hits like "American Hustle" and "22 Jump Street" adding to the studio's brand value. For the fiscal year ended March 2014, Sony Pictures generated operating income of $501 million on revenue of $8.05 billion; its parent reported total operating income of $257 million on sales and revenue of $75.41 billion.

"Sony Pictures overall is quite important from a marketing relationship point of view, just because it's one of the few properties now that is really getting people to see the Sony name anymore," said Benjamin Cavender, a senior consumer electronics analyst at China Research Group in Shanghai.

Some of the frustration with this longstanding malaise boiled over last year when an activist investor, New York hedge fund manager Daniel Loeb, bought a 7 percent stake in the company and urged CEO Kazuo Hirai to spin off the entertainment division. Hirai didn't, but Sony cut costs, laying off dozens of workers, to boost Sony Entertainment's profits before Loeb sold his stake earlier this year.

Like many long-established companies that have been caught off guard by technological upheaval, Sony was still making too much money in its traditional lines of businesses to have the incentive to try something radically different, analysts said.

In the meantime, a traditional tendency toward building consensus fostered bureaucratic obstacles between its various lines of business that make "it very difficult for anyone to integrate anything within the organization because people aren't talking to each other and they're not sharing information," Cavender said.

"Sony is run like a group of silos," agreed Wedbush Securities analyst Michael Pachter, who bought more than 8,000 shares of Sony stock after Loeb tried to shake things up. "I don't think Sony was ever going to be the first mover (in entertainment's digital shift), but being Japanese meant things moved a lot slower than they should have been. They could have been a lot more nimble."

Chris Rock and wife Malaak Compton-Rock headed for divorce

AP

In this Dec. 3, 2014 file photo, actor Chris Rock attends the premiere of "Top Five" at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Chris Rock filed for divorce from his wife Malaak Compton-Rock, a statement from his representative confirmed Sunday.

The statement went on to specify that Rock and his family request privacy as they go through this process because it is a personal matter.

Comedian Chris Rock and philanthropist Malaak Compton-Rock had been married for 19 years. They have two daughters, Lola Simone, 12, and Zahra Savannah, 10.

Alicia Keys welcomes second child

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Alicia Keys gave birth to son Genesis Ali Dean early on Saturday morning. It's baby number two for the Grammy-winner and her husband, producer-rapper Swizz Beatz, who are also parents to 4-year-old Egypt Daoud.

The 33-year-old singer shared the news on her Instagram account Sunday with a photo of Genesis's footprints. The image also details that the baby was born at 1:52 a.m. and weighs 6 pounds, 5 ounces.

Keys expressed excitement in her social media captions, saying that "the joy of joy is joy" and that she is grateful.

Grand Ole Opry's Little Jimmy Dickens hospitalized

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Grand Ole Opry legend Little Jimmy Dickens has been hospitalized with an undisclosed illness.

Jessie Schmidt, a publicist for the Opry, said in a news release Sunday that Dickens was admitted to a Nashville-area hospital on Dec. 25 and that he's in "critical care."

His last performance at the Opry was Dec. 20 as part of his birthday celebration. He turned 94 a day earlier.

Dickens, who is 4-foot-11, has performed on the Opry almost continuously since 1948. He became an Opry member in 1948 and was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1983.

His hits include "Take An Old Cold Tater (And Wait)," "Country Boy," "Out Behind The Barn," and "May The Bird Of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose."

Egypt: Biblical epic 'Exodus' banned over errors

CAIRO (AP)—Egypt on Sunday said it banned Ridley Scott's biblical epic "Exodus: Gods & Kings" because the Hollywood blockbuster distorts Egypt's history and presents a "racist" image of Jews.

AP

This image released by 20th Century Fox shows Joel Edgerton, left, and Dar Salim in a scene from "Exodus: Gods and Kings."

The Culture Ministry explained its decision for the first time in a statement issued a few days after the ban was announced. It said the film put forth a reading of Egypt's history that is at odds with the story of Moses told by the world's monotheistic religions. Egypt is a conservative country with a Muslim majority and a sizable Christian minority.

Censors objected to the "intentional gross historical fallacies that offend Egypt and its pharaonic ancient history in yet another attempt to Judaize Egyptian civilization, which confirms the international Zionist fingerprints all over the film," the statement said.

The ministry said the movie inaccurately depicts ancient Egyptians as "savages" who kill and hang Jews, arguing that hanging did not exist in ancient Egypt. It said the film also presents a "racist" depiction of Jews as a people who mounted an armed rebellion. The ministry said religious scriptures present Jews as weak and oppressed.

The statement also objected to the depiction of God as a child, which also drew criticism in the West.

The ministry said it had convened two committees — one of censors and one of archaeologists — to review the film. The committee of archeologists agreed with the decision to ban the film because it showed "a false and wrong mental image of Egypt's history," the ministry said.

Artistic works dealing with religion are often banned in the Muslim world because religious scholars argue that the depiction of prophets is unacceptable. Such works are also often at odds with the Islamic portrayal of biblical prophets, which itself often diverges from their portrayal in Judaism and Christianity. According to Islam, for example, Jesus was not crucified, and the prophet Abraham was ordered to sacrifice Ishmael, not Isaac.

"Noah," another Hollywood biblical epic, was banned in Egypt and much of the Muslim world due to its depiction of prophets and fears it would offend viewers. Perceived insults to Islam have in the past sparked protests and deadly violence.

Muslim countries have also censored movies over graphic sex scenes and portrayals of homosexuality.

The United Arab Emirates also decided to ban "Exodus: Gods & Kings." Juma al-Leem, of the National Media Council, told The Associated Press the movie contained historical and religious errors that are not in Islam or in the Bible. "We respect all religions, not just Islam," al-Leem said.

AP

In this Nov. 6, 2006 file photo, Grand Ole Opry star Little Jimmy Dickens arrives at the 40th Annual CMA Awards in Nashville, Tenn.

Bilingual grandkids will gain broader mental development

DEAR ABBY: "Left Out in Florida" (Sept. 2) feels it is inconsiderate of her daughter-in-law to speak only her native language (not English) with her children in front of their grandparents. You advised that the mother should speak English in this situation.

My son attends a bilingual immersion school, and I have experience with this issue. I have attended lectures about raising bilingual children.

It is extremely difficult to pass on a language other than English to kids living in America. As the children grow, they will be increasingly drawn to English. The most successful families are those who do exactly what the mom in the letter is doing. They speak only their native language with their children and are very persistent about it. This is the recommendation of the experts in the field.

What should also be happening is translation for others when necessary. Ideally, there is a level of support from family and friends who understand what a worthwhile, yet difficult, task this is. Grandparents don't need to understand everything that is said, and their job is to speak English with the youngsters so they become truly bilingual.

Bilingualism is an incredible gift to give a child. It goes beyond just learning another language. It broadens mental development, thought patterns and world perspective. It must be done during childhood while the brain is still pliable, and continue until adulthood or the language will be lost.

These parents obviously understand the value of what they are doing. I hope the grandparents will support it.

BILINGUAL MOM IN OREGON

DEAR BILINGUAL MOM: Thank you for lending your insight. I heard from others who, like you, have firsthand knowledge on this issue:

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My son also married a woman from another country. She has spoken only her native tongue to my granddaughter from day one. My son speaks English to his daughter. My daughter-in-law speaks English to me.

I care for the little girl three days a week. She's 4 and completely bilingual. I thank my lucky stars that she has this opportunity. And I'm glad for her other grandparents, who do not live in this country or speak English, but can communicate with her. I don't worry that they're secretly talking about me. "Left Out" should be grateful her grandkids have this huge advantage.

JEAN IN MILLERSVILLE, MD.

DEAR ABBY: I wish you had suggested to "Left Out" that she and her husband try to learn the language of their grandchildren. It's not difficult to learn a few foreign conversational phrases, or even be able to carry on a coherent conversation using free or inexpensive tools available at the library or online.

Of course, in order to do that, they have to want to reach out and make the effort. Perhaps if they did, the daughter-in-law might feel a little more welcoming and less distant.

Ever since my grandkids started attending a bilingual school, I have been studying to try to keep up with them, and so have the other grandparents. Communication is a two-way street!

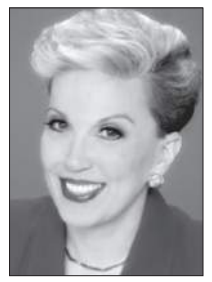
JUDI IN ELGIN, S.C.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

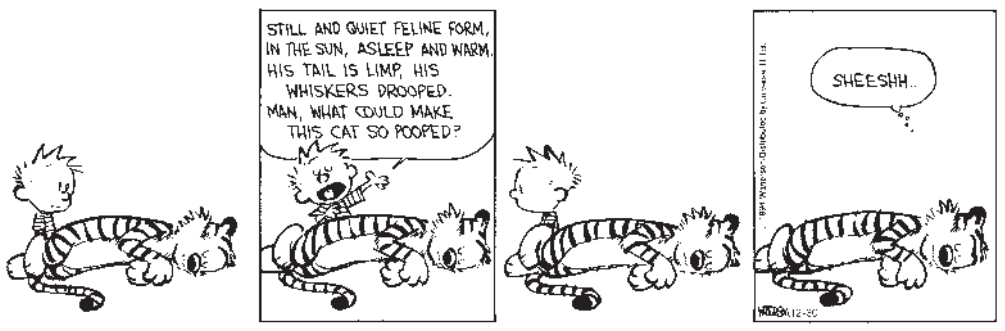


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

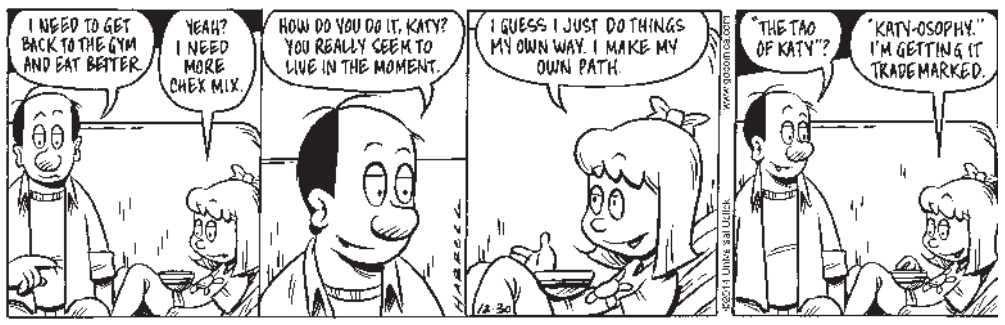

STILL AND QUIET FELINE FORM, IN THE SUN, ASLEEP AND WARM. HIS TAIL IS LIMP, HIS WHISKERS DROOPED. MAN, WHAT COULD MAKE THIS CAT SO POOPED?
SHEESHH..

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

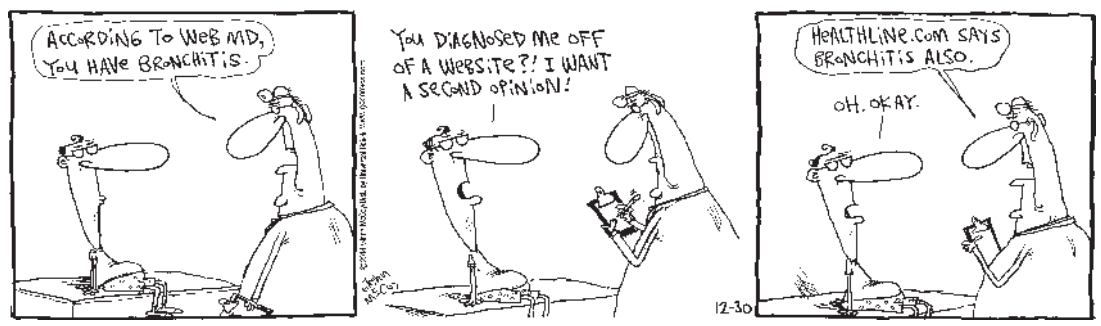
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


I NEED TO GET BACK TO THE GYM AND EAT BETTER.
YEAH? I NEED MORE CHEX MIX.
HOW DO YOU DO IT, KATY? YOU REALLY SEEM TO LIVE IN THE MOMENT.
I GUESS I JUST DO THINGS MY OWN WAY. I MAKE MY OWN PATH.
"THE TAO OF KATY"?
"KATY-OSOPHY." I'M GETTING IT TRADEMARKED.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


ACCORDING TO WEB MD, YOU HAVE BRONCHITIS.
YOU DIAGNOSED ME OFF OF A WEBSITE?! I WANT A SECOND OPINION!
HEALTHLINE.COM SAYS BRONCHITIS ALSO.
OH. OKAY.
12-30

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

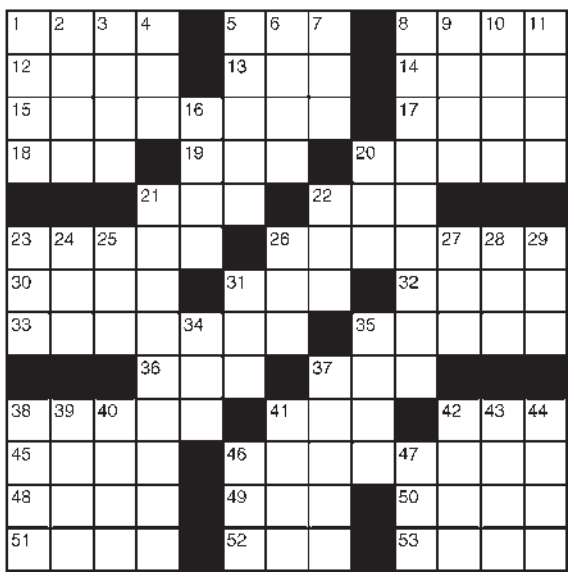
ACROSS
1 Taj Mahal city
5 Your, in the Bible
8 Apiece
12 "Aquarius" musical
13 Fish eggs
14 Picture of health?
15 November event
17 Office part-timer
18 Fellow
19 "A mouse!"
20 Rapper's entourage
21 Conclude
22 Evergreen type
23 Between, poetically
26 Milky
30 Harmonization, for short
31 Tarzan's son
32 Corn state
33 Old Spanish money
35 Partitioned
36 Coat rack piece
37 Sermon subject
38 Rasp
41 Hostel
42 Gasoline stat
45 New Jersey city
46 Landlord's ouster
48 Margarine
49 Wander
50 Pod vegetable
51 Teller's partner
52 Indivisible
53 Encounter

DOWN
1 Throat clearer
2 Festive
3 Nothing (Fr.)
4 Curved path
5 Gave it a shot
6 Smee's boss
7 Longing
8 Blackmail
9 War god
10 Rotating pieces
11 Overdone advertising
16 Campground construct
20 Selfie, e.g.
21 Rule breaker?
22 Wray of "King Kong"
23 Recipe meas.
24 Letter before zee
25 Office holders
26 — Angeles
27 Many millennia
28 Shock partner
29 Young chap
31 Satchel
34 Ball prop
35 Galvanizing matter
37 Sly and nasty
38 Unappetizing food
39 Portrayal
40 Mideast gulf
41 Director Reitman
42 Karaoke need
43 Skin opening
44 Pesky insect
46 Id counterpart
47 Jerry's pursuer

Solution time: 22 mins.

F	A	D			W	E	D			G	L	O	W
A	G	O	G		A	G	E			R	E	D	O
L	A	I	R		D	O	N			A	I	D	E
A	R	N	A	Z		S	I	G	N				
			N	E	T		M	A	D	M	A	N
A	L	A	D	D	I	N		S	M	I	L	E
B	E	R	G		P	O	W		A	N	T	E
U	N	C	U	T		W	A	R	R	I	O	R
T	S	H	I	R	T		S	O	S			
			G	Y	R	O		W	H	O	O	P
E	V	E	N		A	D	D		A	N	K	H
L	I	M	O		M	O	O		-	U	R	E
M	A	U	L		P	R	O			S	A	W

Yesterday's answer 12-30



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Eliza Dushku, 34; Laila Ali, 37; Tiger Woods, 39; Matt Lauer, 57.

Happy Birthday: Fight for what you want and protect what you already have. This is the year to step up and make things happen, not a time to be complacent and wait for the universe to unfold around you. Let your shrewdness lead the way and don't look back. It's up to you to expand your interests and your goals. Your numbers are 5, 18, 24, 26, 31, 36, 43.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You will need to start thinking about what you want to do and how you intend to get ahead. Impulsive moves will not turn out so well, but if you plan your actions and reconnect with past colleagues, you will find your way. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Focus on having fun. Moderation is key, and romance is high. Spending time with the people you love the most and sharing insight with those you prefer to do business with will lead to a happy and prosperous new year. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't share your next move, just go ahead and make it happen. Taking everyone by surprise will add to the excitement and improve your end result. Good fortune is within reach if you are disciplined and determined. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Take extra time to nurture an important relationship and to make positive plans that will help you get ahead financially. Use your imagination and you will come up with a plan that is unique, attainable and supported by others. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Put your time and effort into positive change. What you do now will map out the way your next year will unfold. Think big, but don't go over budget or try to do something that is unrealistic. Patience and practicality will be required. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Travel, network and spend time with people who can help you get ahead professionally or who can positively influence your standard of living personally. Love and romance are highlighted along with partnerships and creative beginnings and good fortune. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Refrain from spending money on your home, your loved ones or on luxury items you don't need. The changes going on around you are best dealt with reasonably. Take stock of the year gone by and embrace new beginnings with optimism. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Getting together with friends, relatives or neighbors will lead to conversations that can help you see your current position clearly and result in wise suggestions that will help you in the new year. Romance is highlighted. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Make changes at home or to your personal life that will make you feel optimistic about your future and confident that you will reach your goals. Present what you have to offer to those who share your interests. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Spend time at home or doing something with the ones you love. Don't let anyone ruin your plans or deter you from doing what you want to do. An impulsive move will not be to your advantage. Bide your time. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Concentrate on maintaining your status quo by refusing to let an emotional incident disturb your balance. Keeping a level head will be important if you are going to reach your goals and take care of your responsibilities. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Draw support from the people you have been able to count on in the past. Make an effort to include someone you love in your plans. Helping others will allow you to show off your skills and attract offers from an unusual source. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are calculating, shrewd and popular. You are impulsive and a frontrunner.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8			6			2	
6			9		5			4
		1				7		
	4		8		3		9	
8								2
	2		7		6		4	
		4				1		
3			1		4			6
	9			8			3	

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/30

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	7	6	9	2	8	1	4	5
8	5	2	4	6	1	9	3	7
9	1	4	7	3	5	8	6	2
6	4	3	1	8	7	2	5	9
7	9	5	2	4	3	6	8	1
1	2	8	5	9	6	3	7	4
5	8	1	6	7	9	4	2	3
2	3	9	8	5	4	7	1	6
4	6	7	3	1	2	5	9	8

Difficulty Level ★ 12/31

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

POLITICAL CARTOONS **Solution: 5 letters**

L	L	Y	S	T	N	I	O	P	W	E	I	V	E	G
A	A	A	L	N	F	M	O	D	E	E	R	F	R	O
W	Y	C	I	I	G	H	U	M	O	R	U	L	U	V
S	G	L	I	C	A	I	N	L	D	R	A	W	T	E
N	S	N	K	M	O	D	S	N	O	I	N	U	L	R
O	S	E	I	E	O	S	L	N	S	C	L	E	U	N
I	E	V	U	T	E	C	E	R	O	Y	A	M	C	M
T	R	E	Q	S	O	W	E	M	O	D	I	A	A	E
A	G	N	O	U	S	V	A	K	E	W	R	G	P	N
C	N	T	N	P	O	I	I	R	O	M	O	A	T	T
U	O	S	A	R	I	T	S	E	T	J	T	Z	I	H
D	C	P	T	O	W	N	E	Y	W	S	I	I	O	E
E	E	N	P	U	B	L	I	S	H	S	D	N	N	M
R	O	B	O	V	E	R	T	O	N	E	E	E	S	E
C	M	E	T	A	P	H	O	R	N	D	A	T	E	S

© 2014 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com Join us on Facebook 12/30

Arts, Captions, Column, Comical, Congress, Controversial, Culture, Daily, Dates, Debt, Draw, Editorial, Education, Events, Freedom, Government, Humor, Issues, Joke, Laws, Leaders, Magazine, Mayor, Memes, Metaphor, Newspaper, Opinion, Overtone, Publish, Quotes, Sign, Social, Themes, Town, Unions, Viewpoints, Views, Voting, Weekly, World

Yesterday's Answer: Broadcaster

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 35, 37, 38, 39, 40 or 41,** order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 43 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE

Beauty Salon
Call: 483-1665

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Realty Management Services

Fina Sisu Terraces
Small 1-BR, 1-BTH. Unit approximately 284 sq.ft. **$250**/month.
2-BR, 1-BTH. **$350-$550**/month. Close to NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted.

Ocean View Terraces
(Navy Hill)) Unit Approximately 642 sq/ft Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apt with private balcony & beautiful view.
$600/month

Sunset View Terraces
(Navy Hill) Unit Approximately 642 sq/ft Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apt with private balcony & beautiful view.
$550/month

Hilltop Condominium*
(San Vicente) Unit approximately 1,024sq/ft Luxury 2BR & 2BTH Apt with private balcony & majestic view. **$700**/month
Luxury 1BR & 1BTH approximately 600 sq/ft **$500**/month
***Wi-Fi & nighttime security exduded**

FEATURES:
- Fully Furnished
- Back-up Generator
- Air-conditioning in all rooms
- FREE WiFi
- Laundry Area
- Nighttime Security
- Ample Parking
- 24hr water

Please visit our website at www.saipan-properties.com Call for an appointment 235-6527/8.

D&Q International Distributors
A TanHoldings Company

D&Q Saipan Co., Ltd is inviting qualified U.S. workers to apply for the following positions:

ACCOUNTANT

Bachelor's degree major in Accounting, with suitable on-job expericene in general accounting. Must possess work-related skills, have knowledge in wholesale, inventory control, costing and pricing. Must have experience in preparation of financial statements and other financial reports, recording and processing revenue, accounts receivables and payables transactions. Proficient in various computer software: MS Excel, Word, Outlook and ACCPAC/Sage or similar accounting system. Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Excellent employee benefits provided.

Interested applicants must submit an application and/or resume at our Saipan office located in the C.T.S.I. building, Lower Base, no later than December 31st, 2014. Applications may also be sent to: mpk@dandq-international.com.

The successful applicant will be required to provide a police clearance. Own transportation an advantage.

D&Q is an equal opportunity employer and has a drug free work environment.
Pre-employment and random drug testing may be required.

TAGA *Sports* is now on issuu.com/tagasports!

Check out the latest issue and back issues of TAGA *Sports,* the CNMI's first and premier sports magazine, on issuu.com/tagasports!

Now you won't have to miss a copy of TAGA *Sports*. Visit issuu.com/tagasports to get your fix on all sports happenings in the CNMI!

To inquire about ad rates or to place an ad, call (670) 235-2440, 235-6397, 235-8747.

WHATZIT Solution: Singing in the rain

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 5-day run in both print and online editions, for as low as $30 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$30
• 5-Liner	$24	$45

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

rasingingin

WHATZIT? © 2014 www.whatzit.com Distributed by Universal Uclick

www.facebook.com/dingbatsgames

Find today's solution in classified section

Steelers top Bengals to win AFC North

PITTSBURGH (AP)—The Pittsburgh Steelers are back on top of the AFC North.

Antonio Brown returned a punt 71 yards for a touchdown and added a clinching 63-yard scoring grab with 2:50 to go in the Steelers' 27-17 victory over the Cincinnati Bengals on Sunday night.

Pittsburgh (11-5) earned its first division title since 2010 by sweeping the season series from the Bengals (10-5-1). The Steelers are the No. 3 seed in the AFC and will host Baltimore in the wild-card round Saturday night. The Bengals are the No. 5 seed and will play at AFC South champion Indianapolis on Sunday.

Brown had 212 all-purpose yards, including the late dazzling catch and run to the end zone.

The victory came at a potentially high cost. Running back Le'Veon Bell left in the third quarter with a hyperextended right knee following a collision with Cincinnati safety Reggie Nelson.

Ravens 20, Browns 10

In Baltimore, the Ravens earned a spot in the postseason Sunday, rallying to defeat the Browns while getting an assist halfway across the country.

Down 10-3 in the fourth quarter, the Ravens kicked a field goal and then took the lead on a 16-yard touchdown pass from Joe Flacco to Torrey Smith with 7:33 left.

Flacco's 2-yard TD throw to Kamar Aiken clinched it.

To reach the playoffs for the sixth time in seven years, Baltimore (10-6) needed to beat the Browns (7-9) and have San Diego lose in Kansas City. Precisely what happened.

Chiefs 19, Chargers 7

In Kansas City, the Chiefs rolled to a that eliminated San Diego from contention, but the Chiefs failed to get the help they needed to qualify for the playoffs.

Baltimore and Houston both needed to lose in games happening at the same time, and both rallied in the second half for wins.

Justin Houston had four sacks for the Chiefs (9-7) to break Derrick Thomas' franchise record with 22 in the season. Cairo Santos kicked four field goals, and Chase Daniel played serviceably in place of injured quarterback Alex Smith, throwing for 157 yards without an interception.

The Chiefs' only touchdown came when wide receiver Dwayne Bowe fumbled inches shy of the goal line early in the second quarter.

Seahawks 20, Rams 6

In Seattle, Marshawn Lynch scored on a 9-yard run, Bruce Irvin returned an interception 49 yards for a touchdown and the Seahawks wrapped up home-field advantage through the NFC playoffs.

The two fourth-quarter touchdowns by Seattle (12-4) capped a six-game win streak to end the regular season. That earned the Seahawks a second straight NFC West title and the ninth division title in franchise history.

The NFC playoffs will go through Seattle for the second straight season.

Packers 30, Lions 20

In Green Bay, a limping Aaron Rodgers threw two touchdown passes to Randall Cobb, Eddie Lacy gashed Detroit's defense for 100 yards and the Packers claimed a fourth straight NFC North title.

Bothered by a left calf injury, Rodgers will appreciate a week off after the win, as the Packers (12-4) earned a bye. Detroit (11-5) will start the postseason at Dallas next week.

Rodgers was carted to the locker room after tossing his first score to Cobb late in the second quarter.

He hobbled back on to the field in the third quarter with the game tied at 14. He led Green Bay on a seven-play, 60-yard drive that ended with a 13-yard score to Cobb with 3:33 left in the quarter. The Packers didn't look back.

Panthers 34, Falcons 3

In Atlanta, Roman Harper and Tre Boston returned interceptions for touchdowns as Carolina's defense led the Panthers to the NFC South crown.

Carolina (7-8-1) will host a wild-card playoff game next week against Arizona. The Panthers have won four straight, but still are the first team to enter the playoffs with a losing record since 2010, when Seattle was 7-9.

Harper scored on a 31-yard return in the second quarter and Boston helped clinch the win with his 84-yard interception return late in the third quarter.

49ers 20, Cardinals 17

In Santa Clara, Jim Harbaugh is done as coach of the 49ers (8-8).

Harbaugh said after the win against playoff-bound Arizona (11-5) on Sunday that he and the 49ers are mutually parting ways.

Colin Kaepernick threw a go-ahead 3-yard touchdown pass to Bruce Miller late in the third quarter. Anquan Boldin caught a 76-yard TD pass and went over 1,000 yards receiving. Frank Gore ran for 144 yards on 25 carries to go over 1,000 yards rushing for the eighth time in 10 NFL seasons with San Francisco.

The Cardinals missed the franchise's first 12-win season, but will play at Carolina in the wild-card round. Ryan Lindley threw touchdown passes of 20 and 41 yards to Michael Floyd in the first half, but couldn't deliver late.

Broncos 47, Raiders 14

In Denver, C.J. Anderson ran for three touchdowns, and the Broncos earned a first-round bye and the AFC's No. 2 seed.

Peyton Manning guided the Broncos (12-4) to at least a tie for the best record in the NFL for the third consecutive season since his arrival in Denver. That's something he accomplished just twice in his 13 years in Indianapolis before missing all of 2011 because of spinal fusion surgery.

Manning, who completed 21 of 37 passes for 273 yards, failed to throw a TD pass for the second time in four weeks after throwing one for 51 consecutive games, just three shy of Drew Brees' NFL record.

Texans 23, Jaguars 17

In Houston, J.J. Watt had three sacks and a safety and Andre Johnson had 134 yards receiving and a touchdown. The Texans (9-7) had a shot at making the playoffs, but Baltimore beat Cleveland to claim the final AFC wild-card spot.

Johnson gave Houston a 21-17 lead with an 8-yard reception early in the fourth. Watt made it 23-17 when he sacked Blake Bortles in the end zone for a safety a few minutes later. The sack gave him 20 1/2 this season, making him the first player in NFL history to have two seasons with 20 or more sacks.

The Jaguars (3-13) had a chance to take the lead late, but Cecil Shorts III was out of bounds on a catch on fourth down.

Cowboys 44, Redskins 17

In Landover, DeMarco Murray and Dez Bryant broke franchise records as the Cowboys (12-4) prepped for the playoffs.

The result was impressive but meaningless for postseason purposes.

Murray rushed for 100 yards on 20 carries, passing Emmitt Smith for the team single-season mark. Murray's 1,845 yards bettered Smith's 1,773 from 1995.

Bryant caught scoring passes of 65 and 23 yards to give him 16 touchdown receptions on the season, breaking Terrell Owens' team record of 15 set in 2007.

Saints 23, Buccaneers 20

In Tampa Bay, Drew Brees threw a 36-yard touchdown pass to Marques Colston with 1:57 remaining to give the Buccaneers the top pick in the NFL draft.

Brees shrugged off three interceptions — two of them stopping promising third-quarter drives — to throw for 281 yards. His only TD pass gave the Saints (7-9) their first lead, and Junior Galette sacked Josh McCown for a safety that provided the final margin.

Doug Martin rushed for a season-best 108 yards and rookie Mike Evans set a Tampa Bay record with his 12th touchdown reception.

Colts 27, Titans 10

In Nashville, Andrew Luck threw for 160 yards and two touchdowns before sitting out the second half.

The Colts (11-5) bounced back from their worst performance this season by nearly matching at halftime what they did offensively in the loss at Dallas. They wound up outgaining the Titans 378-192 as the AFC South champs swept their division a second straight season for the first time in franchise history.

Indianapolis will host Cincinnati in a wild-card game on Sunday.

With their 10th straight loss and Tampa Bay's loss to New Orleans, the Titans (2-14) finished their worst season since 1994 and will pick second overall in the draft.

Bills 17, Patriots 9

In Foxborough, Kyle Orton threw for one touchdown, Anthony Dixon ran for another and the Bills finished their first winning season in 10 years with a win over the going-through-the motions Patriots.

With the top seed in the AFC playoffs already clinched, the Patriots used quarterback Tom Brady for only the first half and held out tight end Rob Gronkowski and five other starters.

The victory snapped several streaks: Buffalo's 0-12 record at Gillette Stadium and New England's 35 straight home wins against AFC teams.

It was a price the Patriots (12-4) were willing to pay to protect key players, although left tackle Nate Solder didn't return after hurting his knee late in the first half.

Jets 37, Dolphins 24

In Miami Gardens, Geno Smith had his best game in a rocky season, throwing for a career-high 358 yards and three touchdowns in what might be Rex Ryan's final game as Jets coach.

Smith's performance more than negated a 97-yard run by Lamar Miller, the longest play from scrimmage in Dolphins history. The Jets rallied from a 10-point third-quarter deficit, and Ryan ordered a fake punt with four minutes left that sealed the victory.

The game was entertaining but mostly meaningless because it involved two teams out of the playoff chase.

Eagles 34, Giants 26

In East Rutherford, Mark Sanchez threw two touchdowns and the Philadelphia Eagles' special teams scored their seventh TD of this otherwise frustrating season in what could have been Tom Coughlin's final game as New York's coach.

Backup tight end Trey Burton returned a blocked punt 27 yards for a score in the third quarter, and Nate Allen iced the game with a late interception. The Eagles (10-6) snapped a three-game losing streak that knocked them out of playoff contention last week.

Vikings 13, Bears 9

In Minneapolis, Teddy Bridgewater threw the go-ahead 44-yard touchdown pass to Adam Thielen in the third quarter, putting one more blemish on a forgettable year for the Bears.

Blair Walsh kicked two field goals, Audie Cole had 11 tackles in his first start of the season, and the Vikings (7-9) ended coach Mike Zimmer's first year on a winning note.

Jay Cutler returned from a one-game benching with 172 yards on 23-for-36 passing without a fumble or an interception, but he rarely threw long and the offense was off all afternoon.

AP

Cincinnati Bengals tight end Jermaine Gresham (84) battles through Pittsburgh Steelers free safety Mike Mitchell (23) and inside linebacker Lawrence Timmons (94) to score a touchdown in the fourth quarter of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 28, 2014, in Pittsburgh.

Pistons hand Cavs second blowout loss

CLEVELAND (AP)—Brandon Jennings scored 25 points, and the Detroit Pistons used an 18-0 run in the second quarter to roll past the Cleveland Cavaliers 103-80 on Sunday.

It was Cleveland's second blowout loss at home in less than two weeks. The Cavaliers lost 127-98 to Atlanta on Dec. 17, and the convincing victory for Detroit drew boos from the home crowd.

Andre Drummond had 16 points and 17 rebounds for the Pistons (7-23), who were coming off a 119-109 victory over Indiana on Friday. Reserve Jodie Meeks scored 14 points, and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope had 13.

Detroit set a season high for made 3-pointers by going 17 for 31 from long range.

Kevin Love had 20 points and 10 rebounds for Cleveland, and LeBron James finished with 17 points, 10 boards and seven assists. Tristan Thompson also had a double-double for the Cavs, collecting 18 points and 11 rebounds.

Cavaliers point guard Kyrie Irving missed his second straight game because of a bruised left knee.

James appeared to get hit in the left hip late in the first half, but started the third quarter. The four-time MVP, clearly frustrated by the loss, went to the bench for good with 5:34 remaining and Cleveland trailing 95-71.

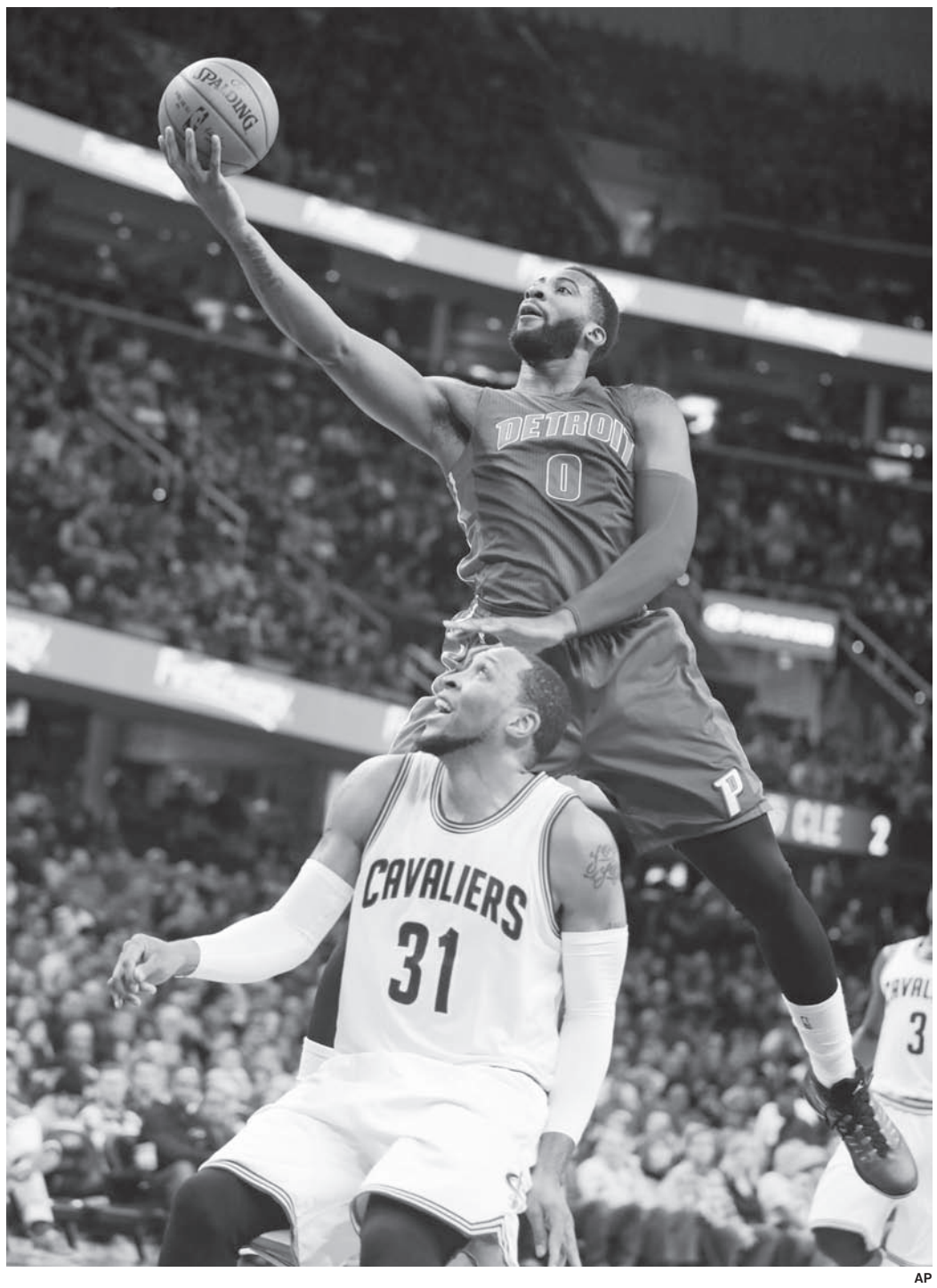
The Pistons have won both of their games since releasing veteran forward Josh Smith last week.

Cleveland led 32-17 early in the second and was ahead 43-32 midway through the period before the Pistons took over. Detroit hit four 3-pointers, including two by Jennings, and Drummond had a dunk and a basket in the lane in a span of 4:40.

The Pistons led 50-43 before Love hit a 3-pointer and James added a free throw in the last minute of the first half, but Detroit increased the lead to double figures early in the third quarter and steadily pulled away, leading by 27 points in the fourth.

Cavaliers forward Shawn Marion left the game with an ankle injury after missing a dunk on a pass from James. Marion landed awkwardly and was on the floor for a couple of minutes before being helped to the locker room. He returned in the third quarter.

It was Detroit's first road win against an Eastern Conference team this season.



AP

Detroit Pistons' Andre Drummond (0) jumps over Cleveland Cavaliers' Shawn Marion (31) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Dec. 28, 2014, in Cleveland.

Mavericks 112, Thunder 107

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki poured in season high-tying 30 points with five rebounds to lead the Dallas Mavericks in a 112-107 win over the Oklahoma City Thunder on Sunday.

Chandler Parsons had 26 points, Monta Ellis contributed 18 and Rajon Rondo finished with 15 points, seven assists and six rebounds for the Mavs, who have won two in a row.

Serge Ibaka paced the Thunder with a season-high 26 points to go along with 10 rebounds. Reggie Jackson deposited 21 points and Russell Westbrook added 18 despite shooting 6-of-23 from the floor.

"I thought we did a really good job on (Russell) Westbrook," said Mavs coach Rick Carlisle, who coached in his 1,000th NBA game. "That was the No. 1 game plan to try and slow these guys down."

Oklahoma City, which had its two-game winning streak snapped, played without Kevin Durant for a sixth straight game due to a sprained ankle.

Charlie Villanueva scored the final five points of an 11-2 run to open the fourth for Dallas that staked it a 92-90 lead.

The Mavs were then down two with just over four minutes to play when they ripped off six straight points. Nowitzki scored the final four to make it a 106-102 game. Jackson answered a the other end with a desperation 3-pointer as the shot clock was expiring to close within one.

Rondo's layup and Nowitzki's two free throws put Dallas up by two possessions, though, with over a minute to play. After a couple of misses by the Thunder which would have closed the gap, Rondo missed a pair of free throws with 8.6 seconds left.

Jackson made it a three-point game with a dunk, but poor transition defense led to a Parson's jam at the other end to account for the final margin.

"We just have to get better. Give both teams credit. Both teams competed and both left everything out on the floor," said Thunder coach Scott Brooks.

Ellis and Nowitzki knocked down successive 3-pointers before Parsons' layup gave the Mavs an early 8-2 lead. Parsons hit a 3 later in the frame that pushed the margin to double digits, and Dallas entered the second quarter up 33-26.

"We wanted to come out and be the more aggressive team," Carlisle added.

Spurs 110, Rockets 106

In San Antonio, Danny Green had 24 points and the injury-depleted San Antonio Spurs beat the Houston Rockets 110-106 on Sunday night, snapping a six-game skid against their intrastate rivals.

Tim Duncan scored 16 points and Manu Ginobili had 15 for San Antonio (19-13), which won for first time in three games.

James Harden had 28 points for Houston (21-8), and Dwight Howard added 24 points and 17 rebounds. The Rockets' newest additions had differing levels of success: Corey Brewer scored 25 points, but Josh Smith finished with five points on 2-of-7 shooting.

Green made four straight free throws in the final minute, helping San Antonio avoid going into overtime for the fourth time in its last six home games.

The Spurs played without Kawhi Leonard (bruised right hand) and Tony Parker (mild strain left hamstring).

Trail Blazers 101, Knicks 79

In Portland, Wesley Matthews had 28 points, including six 3-pointers, and the Trail Blazers beat the short-handed Knicks.

Portland was 16 for 36 from 3-point range. Nicolas Batum had five 3-pointers and 17 points.

It was the eighth straight loss for the Knicks, who had just nine available players to start the game, and then lost Carmelo Anthony for the second half because of a sore left knee.

Portland, which led by as many as 27 points, has won eight of its last nine games.

Cole Aldrich had 12 points and a career-high 19 rebounds for New York, and Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 17 points.

Raptors 116, Nuggets 102

In Denver, Kyle Lowry had 30 points and 11 assists, leading Toronto to the win.

Lou Williams scored 31 points as the Eastern Conference-leading Raptors completed a sweep of the season series against Denver. They also beat the Nuggets 112-107 in overtime on Dec. 8.

The Raptors have won seven of eight.

Ty Lawson led Denver with 28 points, and Wilson Chandler had 20 points and 10 rebounds.

Kenneth Faried, who had 26 points and a career-best 25 rebounds in Friday's win over Minnesota, had 17 points and 19 boards for the Nuggets, who have lost three of four.

Suns 116, Lakers 107

In Los Angeles, Goran Dragic scored 24 points, Eric Bledsoe had 20 of his 22 after halftime, and the Phoenix Suns beat the Los Angeles Lakers for their sixth consecutive victory.

Isaiah Thomas added 15 points for the balanced Suns, who haven't lost with their new starting lineup. Phoenix weathered an impressive Los Angeles surge in the final minutes for its seventh win in eight meetings with the Lakers, who lost their third straight despite Kobe Bryant's return.

Bryant had 10 points, eight rebounds and seven assists in 32 minutes during his first game back from a three-game absence to rest his aching 36-year-old body.

Nick Young hit four 3-pointers and scored 21 points while taking up Kobe's scoring slack again for the Lakers, who got within one point late.

SIDEBAR

Durant out again with sprained ankle

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Kevin Durant is out again for Oklahoma City with a sprained right ankle, and Dallas center Tyson Chandler is a late scratch due to back spasms.

Durant, who was sidelined the first 17 games of the season with a broken right foot, will miss his sixth straight game because of his latest injury.

Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle said Chandler's condition wasn't serious. After playing the Thunder on Sunday night, Dallas is at home again Tuesday night against Washington.

The 32-year-old Chandler has started all 31 games since returning to the Mavericks in an offseason trade with New York. He is third in the league at 11.9 rebounds per game, and also third in shooting at 68 percent.

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Lakers claimed center Tarik Black off waivers from the Houston Rockets on Sunday, waiving injured guard Xavier Henry to make room on their roster.

Lakers coach Byron Scott hopes the tough-nosed, cerebral rookie can contribute immediately to the Lakers, whose big men have struggled this season.

"The one thing I don't think we have that we would love to have is more athleticism (and) toughness," Scott said before the Lakers' game against Phoenix. "From what I've heard, he's very active on the defensive end, great communicator on the defensive end, and those are two things that we need from our bigs. We'll see how he translates that from Houston to here."

Scott said Black is scheduled to arrive in Los Angeles on Monday for a physical, hopefully joining the team for its game in Denver on Tuesday.

The 6-foot-11 Black started 12 of his 25 games this season for Houston, filling in capably for injured Dwight Howard. Black averaged 4.2 points and 5.1 rebounds per game while making 54.2 percent of his shots with the Rockets, who were forced to waive him Friday when they signed Josh Smith.

Black spent his final college season at Kansas after playing three seasons at Memphis in his hometown. He went undrafted, but won a roster spot with a strong performance in summer league play and training camp.

Henry tore his left Achilles tendon in practice Nov. 24, ending his second season with Los Angeles after just 86 minutes over nine games. He has showed promise while appearing in 52 games for the Lakers, but has been dogged by injuries throughout his tenure.

Real Crispy Pata routs Matansa

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Real Crispy Pata got off to a strong start, as it whipped Matansa Blazers, 6-1, in the boys U15 division in the 2014 SSS Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament last Saturday at the TSL Sports Complex.

Real Crispy Pata earned the lopsided win after going all out in the second half. Real Crispy Pata was up by only one at halftime, 2-1, before scoring four more goals to cruise to victory in its first game in the four-team division.

Edwin Kim and Bada Lee scored the two goals for Real Crispy Pata in the opening frame and added one each in the second half. Cody Leo and Joshua Abragan drilled the two other goals for the winning squad in the final half. Other members of Real Crispy Pata are Sunjoon Tenorio, Clayton Izuka, Christopher Aninzo, Keeanu Diaz, Daniel Bae Jue Won, and Alex Park.

On the Matansa side, only Evan Belcher scored in his team's first game in the tournament. Joining Belcher on the squad are Chad Shankweiler, Taka Borja, Jherico Tiamzon, Jonathan Capayas, Jonah Pohl, and Davy Laxa.

In other results, Orange Rangers and Sisig United pulled of close wins in their respective division matches.

In the co-ed U12, Sisig United edged Orange Rangers, 4-2.

Rintaro Miyawaki powered Sisig United to victory with his hat-trick. He made all three goals in the first half to put Sisig United in the driver's seat. Eun Syu Hahn posted the other goal for Sisig United and it was a crucial one, as Orange Rangers threatened to mount a comeback in the second half.

Sebastian Manabat kept Oranges Rangers' hopes alive in the last 20 minutes of play with his pair of goals, but his team still fell short after failing to get contributions from other players. Orange Rangers absorbed their second loss in as many games, while Sisig United improved its record to 1-1.

Joining Miyawaki and Hahn on Sisig United's roster are Antonio Cino, David Kim, Maya Sato, Maya Shimizu, Rinto Takahashi, Cullen Taisacan, Brian Sun Kim, Jon Villagomez, Andy Kim, David Meyers Jr., Danielle Colombo, Mark Esalan, and Erie Kate Ortega.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Three Real Crispy Pata defenders hound a Matansa Blazers player during the second half of their boys U15 game in the 2014 SSS Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament last Saturday at the TSL Sports Complex.

Orange Rangers also have a 15-player roster with Erica Santiago, Princess Alcantara, Jhoey Noble, Benster Benjamin, Angelo Ada, Ian Karl Maniago, Paulyn Grace Joyce, Brian and Ian Lubao, Merrick Toves, Daniel Mark Pablo, Jaydee Jose, John Mark Anastacio, and Kirt Andon completing the lineup.

In the girls U15 division, Girly Flowers & Rainbows bounced back from an opening day loss to Lady Blues after nosing out Oranger Rangers, 6-5.

Mary Kay Alferos and Catherine Joy Barrozo knocked in three goals apiece to hand Girly Flowers & Rainbows the win.

Barrozo scored a brace in the first half, while Alferos had one to lift Girly Flowers & Rainbows to a 3-2 advantage. Alcantara and Joyce also suited up for Orange Rangers in the girls competition and recorded one goal each to keep their team in the game after the first half.

In the second half, Orangers Rangers only matched Girly Flowers & Rainbows' production, allowing the latter to secure the win. Joyce added two more goals for Oranger Rangers in the final frame, duplicating Alferos' output, while Alipio and Alcantara earned one apiece.

Jets golf fundraising event next month

The Jets baseball team will be holding its first ever golf fundraising tournament on Jan. 31 at the 18-hole par-72 Marianas Country Club in Marpi.

Tee time is set at 12:30pm and the tournament will follow a double Peoria format. Registration fee is $80.

Cash prizes await the Top 3 finishers, while the fourth and fifth placers will be getting special prizes.

For more information, call or text Jets manager Froilan Camacho Jr. at 7890875 or email him at camacho_775@hotmail.com.

This is the third fundraising event organized by Camacho, as the Jets manager also put together two softball tournaments in October and early this month.

Fifteen teams joined the Oct. 12 and Dec. 12 softball weekend tournaments.

The Jets are fundraising to come up with the money that would support their campaign in the upcoming Saipan Baseball League season, which will start on Jan. 12 at the Francisco M. "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield. ***(Jon Perez)***

Masters caging next month

A Masters basketball league will take place next month at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

League coordinator Boy Garcia said the competition is open to players in the 45-and-above age group, but each team is allowed to have three players in the 40-and-above division as reinforcements.

Games will be played three times a week and the final schedule will be released once the participating teams are named.

The league is looking to have at least eight squads.

For more information, contact Boy Garcia at 788-6386. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

EXPERT

From Page 28

"Ours is the only track facility that was certified and met the requirements of the IAAF. We want to keep it that way so we could host various events here on the island," he added. "We want to make sure everything is done properly so we could use the facility longer."

NMSA has already completed all the necessary paperwork for the project and is in the process of reviewing the amount that will be used for the renovation before submitting the documents to the Northern Mariana Housing Corp. next year. Reviews of the paper works are expected to be done by January as some NMSA officials are still off-island for the holidays and are expected to be back next month.

NMSA wants to make sure that there won't be any discrepancy once they submitted the figures to NMHC to ensure the smooth flow of the bidding process.

Once approved by the NMHC, which will be funding the project through a Community Development Block Grant, NMSA can start with the bidding process and hopefully begin the resurfacing of the facility in March.

Rogolifoi, in an earlier report, said that NMSA would strictly monitor the expenses for the renovation of the track to stay within the budget.

Harsh weather conditions and years of continued use have caused the deterioration of the rubber surface, which are now surrounded by black patches and bubbles.

NMSA aims to open the track facility by May in time for several Northern Marianas Athletics-organized events. The new track oval, once completed, will have a light blue color not the usual pinkish-red hue.

The CNMI sports arm is looking to reopen the facility in the second quarter of 2015, as Oceania Athletics Association president Geoff Gardner earlier said that at least two months are needed to put the adhesive and lay out the new rubber surface.

ARMATECH

From Page 28

ed lopsided wins last Saturday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Armatech prevailed in the battle of unbeaten squad, downing Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan in the first game, 49-40, to improve its record to 3-0 and take the No. 1 spot in the team standings.

Irish Pagarao towed Armatech to its third victory in as many games, scoring 17 points, while Rachel Abrams and Chevy Kate Alipio backed her up, adding 10 and 8, respectively. Pagarao and company led from start to finish, keeping its safe distance against Fiesta to hand the latter its first loss in three matches.

Jahnelle Francisco and Friendly Joy Pena paced Fiesta, firing 14 markers apiece.

In the second game, Shirley's got twin digits from three players en route to a 52-16 spanking of Sun Palace Hotel.

Dianne Pablo was among the double-figure scorer for Shirley's, nailing 12, just 4 points short of Sun Palace's total output. Alexa Vergara and Negahr Rastguiy chipped in 10 apiece, while six other Shirley's players made it to the board for the team's balance scoring.

While Shirley's drew points from a lot of players, it was a different story for the hapless Sun Palace, which got baskets only from four players. Ljay Francisco led Sun Palace with her 6 markers, Maria Dalusong and Shaina Abadilla had 4 apiece, and Pauline Villanueva contributed 2.

With Shirley's firepower too much for Sun Palace, the former raced to a 28-8 halftime lead and was never threatened from thereon, handing the latter its third loss in as many matches.

In the third game, IT&E barged into the win column after two futile attempts, following a 46-23 triumph over Kanoa Resort (1-2).

Jan Travilla suited up for IT&E for the first time and provided enough support to main gunner Kyla Ito in their 23-point winning margin against Kanoa Resort. Ito had a game-high 14 points, while Travilla chipped in 10. Five other IT&E players combined for 22 more points as they nearly matched the production of the entire Kanoa Resort crew.

Kanoa, which was still in contention after the first half, 15-21, fell apart in the second, drilling only 8 points behind its three field goals. Kanoa had 10 players for the match, but only three scored with Natasha Ngairausui logging 9 and Rose Jones and Kelsey Lizama registering 8 and 6 markers, respectively.

First Game

Armatech 49–Pagarao 17, Abrams 10, Alipio 8, Javier 4, Yiu 4, Mettao 2, Pangilinan 2, Alferos 2

Fiesta Resort 40–Francisco 14, Pena 14, Reyes 5, Lee 4, Ada 3.

Scoring by halves: 23-14, 49-40.

Second Game

Shirley's 52–Pablo 12, Vergara 10, Rastguiy 10, Castillo 6, Santiago 4, Echavez 4, Enriquez 2, Ito 2, Abantao 2.

Sun Palace 16–Francisco 6, Dalusong 4, Abadilla 4, Villanueva 2.

Scoring by halves: 28-8, 52-16.

Third Game

IT&E 46–Ito 14, Travilla 10, Villagomez 8, Alegre 6, Reyes 4, Flores 2, Manibusan 2.

Kanoa Resort 23–Ngirausui 9, Jones 8, Lizama 6.

Scoring by halves: 21-15, 46-23.

VOYAGERS

From Page 28

neither team gained an advantage in the last match of the year. The score was tied at 4-4 after the first 6 match-ups in the singles and two doubles events in the race-to-9 contest.

The Jonny's crew of Rey Pinangay, Rodel dela Cruz, Rey Hermogenes, and Rey Ayson matched every shot made by Mark Butac, Brian Nelvis, Rolly Villanueva, and Roman Rodriguez to force the deadlock.

Butac teamed up with Nelvis in another doubles 8-ball match and easily defeated Pinangay and Ayson to give the Voyagers a 5-4 edge.

Rodriguez and Nelvis, who won all of the 6 matches he played, then scored consecutive wins over Pinangay and Ayson to move the Voyagers two victories away from clinching the crown, 7-4.

Dela Cruz kept the Crazy 8's title bid alive when he bested RJ Mascarinas in their contest. That proved to be Jonny's final win, as the Voyagers were victorious in the final two events.

Butac and Nelvis downed Pinagay and dela Cruz in the doubles, while Rodriguez sealed the win for the Voyagers after dispatching Pinangay in the last singles 8-Ball event.

The Voyagers scored a 9-8 win over the Hustlers in the opening of the Budweiser Cup then followed it up with a 9-6 decision over the Jokers Str8 Shooters to clinch a finals berth. The Crazy 8 sealed the other finals spot after posting a 9-7 triumph over Smoke Pub Sang&D'Gang.

Jokers IT&E finished second to Saipan TV after the elimination round with the Voyagers compiling a 150-75 slate against the Hustlers' 151-74 slate.

33rd Christmas Island Relay

PHOTOS By JON PEREZ

From left, Seiya Eda, Jack Kabiriel, Mamiko Oshima-Berger, Beo Ngirchongor, and Tony Ichiou of Team Usagi run toward the finish line in last Saturday's 33rd Christmas Island Relay at the Last Command Post.

Team Candy Cane Crushers members stand out with their red knee-high socks.

Gerald Galang, left, of Team Swoldiers runs ahead of his teammates.

Jason Tarkong, second left, joins Team Last Minute.

Four runners head to the finish line.

Saipan Swim Club Trident members try to outrun each other.

The Saipan Community School Tsunamis slow down as they cross the finish line.

Team Dark Horse is made up of members of Get Fit CNMI.

A team composed of T Galleria employees are a few steps away from the finish line.

Steelers top Bengals to win AFC North

PAGE 24

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Pistons hand Cavs second blowout loss

PAGE 25

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Runners compete in the 1,500m event during the 2014 PSS/McDonald's All Schools Championships at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field facility, which will undergo resurfacing next year.

Expert must supervise track resurfacing

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Marianas Sports Association will require the winning contractor to bring in an expert construction manager once resurfacing works at the Oleai track and field facility begin early next year.

NMSA executive director Tony Rogolifoi said the construction manager must stay for the entire duration of the project to make sure that everything will be done according to the standards set by the International Association of Athletics Federations.

"The contractor must bring in an expert in this field. The person should have been approved or must have an IAAF certification to make sure everything is done correctly," said Rogolifoi.

The expert construction manager must come either from the mainland or Europe and should be knowledgeable in overseeing a similar project that meets IAAF standards.

Rogolifoi said that they want to make sure the entire process—from removing the actual old surface to putting the adhesive and laying the new track—is done accordingly and properly.

See EXPERT on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Shirley's Coffee Shop's Jeraldine Castillo dribbles past a Sun Palace Hotel defender during the second half of their game in the women's division of the 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic last Saturday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Armatech takes solo lead; IT&E, Shirley's crush foes

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Armatech gained the solo lead in in the women's division of the 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic, while Shirley's Coffee Shop and IT&E post-

See ARMATECH on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jokers IT&E Voyagers members pose for a photo after beating Jonny's Crazy 8, 9-5, in the finals of the season-ending Budweiser Cup Tuesday 8-Ball Billiards League last week at the latter's home bar in Garapan.

Voyagers rule Tuesday Budweiser Cup

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Jokers IT&E Voyagers defeated Jonny's Crazy 8, 9-5, in the finals of the season-ending Budweiser Cup Tuesday 8-Ball Billiards League last week at the latter's home bar in Garapan.

It was the Voyagers' second straight division crown as they also ruled the regular season, defeating elimination round top-notcher Saipan TV Hustlers in their title game on Dec. 2.

It was a tight contest from the start as

See VOYAGERS on Page 26